Mr. GURDON's
SERMONS
AT
Mr. *BOYLE*'s
LECTURE
In the Years 1721 and 1722.

Mr. GORDON's

SERMONS

AT

Mr. BOYLE's

LECTURE

In the Years 1721 and 1722.

12.2.5.c

The Pretended Difficulties in Natural or Reveal'd Religion no Excuse for Infidelity.

SIXTEEN

SERMONS

Preach'd in the CHURCH of

St. *Mary-le-Bow, London*;

In the Years 1721 and 1722:

AT THE

LECTURE Founded by the Honourable

ROBERT BOYLE, *Esq*;

By *Brampton Gurdon*, A. M.

Chaplain to the Right Honourable

THOMAS Earl of *Macclesfield*,

Lord High Chancellour of GREAT BRITAN.

LONDON:

Printed for ROBERT KNAPLOCK, *at the* Bishop's-Head, *in St.* Paul's Churchyard. 1723.

42

The Pretended Difficulties in Natural or Revealed Religion no Excuse for Infidelity.

SERMONS

Preach'd in the CHURCH of

St. Mary-le-Bow, London;

In the Year 1723:

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

Lecture Founded by the Honourable

ROBERT BOYLE, Esq;

By Brampton Gurdon, A. M.

Chaplain to the Right Honourable

THOMAS Earl of Macclesfield,

Lord High Chancellour of GREAT BRITAIN.

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Head, in St. Paul's Churchyard. 1723.

TO THE

Right HONOURABLE

RICHARD,

Earl of *Burlington*;

The Right Reverend Fathers in GOD,

CHARLES *Lord Biſhop of* Wincheſter,

EDMUND *Lord Biſhop of* Lincoln,

SAMUEL *Lord Biſhop of* Carlile,

AND

WHITE *Lord Biſhop of* Peterborough,

TRUSTEES

Appointed by the moſt Reverend Father in GOD, THOMAS late Lord Archbiſhop of *Canterbury*, the laſt Surviving Truſtee named by the Honourable

ROBERT BOYLE, *Eſq*;

Theſe SERMONS are moſt humbly Dedicated.

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AND

WILLIAM Lord Bishop of Peterborough,

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Appointed by the most Reverend Father in GOD, THOMAS late Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, the last Surviving Trustee named by the Honourable

ROBERT BOYLE, Esq;

These SERMONS are most humbly Dedicated.

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ERRATA.

ERRATA.

PAGE 94. line 15 insert *me*. p. 183. l. 15. dele *and*. p. 261. l. 19. *of* for *by*. p. 461. l. 9. dele *some*.

SERM.

SERMON I.

1 TIMOTHY IV. 8.

— *Godlineſs is profitable unto all Things, having the Promiſe of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come.*

THE Subject which I propoſe to diſcourſe upon is of the laſt Importance and Concern for all of us to be ſatisfy'd in; for 'tis no leſs than this,

1. WHETHER Men at firſt either grew out of the Earth ſpontaneouſly as Trees; or that there has been

always a Succeſſion of Men and Women upon Earth, propagated after the ſame manner, as they are at preſent; or whether a Wiſe and Intelligent BEING ſent us into this World.

2. WHETHER we are to go, as the *Materialiſt* contends for, to the Place *quo non nati jacent*; or whether, as the religious Man believes, there is to be another State of Being for us after this ſhort Thread of Life is wound off.

IF any Prejudices were allowable, they would certainly be in this Controverſy between Us and the *Atheiſts*, where all the Advantages to Mankind are on the Side of Religion; and nothing but Darkneſs and Deſpair in the *Atheiſt*'s Scheme of Things. The Profitableneſs of Godlineſs, or of living under a Senſe of religious Principles, and the Unprofitableneſs of Infidelity, may be made very plain to us, tho' we ſhould ſuppoſe that we may be miſtaken in believing them true. And for theſe Reaſons:

1. BECAUSE

1. BECAUSE nothing but ſuch a Belief can carry a Man thro' the Difficulties and Miſeries that human Life is ſubject to.

2. BECAUSE the Belief of religious Principles reſtrains a Man from no Enjoyments but ſuch as would be hurtful to him and make him uneaſy.

3. BECAUSE living under a Senſe of Religious Principles will make a Man's Mind eaſy with regard to any Apprehenſions of a Future State.

1. THAT nothing but the Belief of Religious Principles, *viz.* of GOD and a Providence can carry a Man through the Difficulties and Miſeries that Human Life is ſubject to. If a Man makes the leaſt Reflection upon the State and Condition of his Life, he will preſently ſee that he has not ſufficient Power of himſelf to procure his own Happineſs. That there are many Things which are able to hurt him, and he neither knows how to ſecure himſelf againſt them, or to acquit himſelf of them, when they have attacked him. There are many Evils he muſt own

himſelf obnoxious to, becauſe he ſees others oppreſs'd by them. If there was no GOD or Providence to have Recourſe to in this diſagreeable Proſpect of Things thoſe whom we all of us allow to be Animals inferior to ourſelves would have greatly the Advantage of him, for as they have no Foreſight of Future Evils, ſo they could have no Forethought about them, nor torment themſelves with any Fears of what may be hereafter; whilſt our continual Anxiety and Solicitude about Future Evils would make the Life of Man appear to be a Scene of Things perfectly diſmal and without any kind of Hope, if *without a God in the World.*

THE Author of the Characteriſticks has fairly own'd that there cannot be a Compleat Virtue without Piety or the Belief of a GOD and Providence, that thoſe Virtues which ſhould ſupport us in Adverſity, ſuch as Fortitude, Patience and Contentment under our Condition, would probably loſe their Effects upon us, if we had nothing to truſt to but Chance or a blind Neceſſity;

ceſſity; that they would be converted into a natural Kind of Spleen and Abhorrence of every Thing in the World, and imbitter our Tempers to that Degree as to ruin the very Principle of all Virtue, ſo as inſtead of Fortitude and Patience, the *Atheiſts* Scheme in his Opinion would produce Impatience and Rage, "Nothing, "*ſays he*, * indeed can be more me-"lancholy than the Thought of living "in a diſtracted Univerſe from whence "many Ills may be ſuſpected, and "where there is nothing that can raiſe "any Paſſion beſides that of Contempt, "Hatred or Diſlike. Such an Opinion "as this may by Degrees imbitter the "Temper and help to impair and ruin "the very Principles of Virtue," Speaking of the Belief of a God and Future State, he ſays †, "by Virtue "of this Belief Man may retain his "Virtue and Integrity even under the "hardeſt Thoughts of Human Na-

* Enquiry concerning Virtue, p. 70. † *Ibid.* Vol. 2. p. 71.

" ture ", but in the other Scheme, " upon diſaſtrous Occaſions and under " the Circumſtances of a hard and cala- " mitous Fortune 'tis ſcarce poſſible " to prevent a natural Kind of Ab- " horrence and Spleen *. And in ano- ther Place, " That 'tis not poſſible " to retain the ſame Firmneſs or Con- " ſtancy of Mind, which Religion " would naturally give a Man † ". Thus we ſee, if this Author's Obſer- vations (who has no ſmall Credit with our Free-thinkers) have any Weight in them, what muſt be the Behaviour of a Man in Adverſity, and what muſt be commonly expected from one that acts upon the Atheiſtick Scheme: In- ſtead of Conſtancy and Firmneſs of Mind under Afflictions, we muſt ex- pect to find the *Atheiſt* raging and cur- ſing his Stars, acting more like a Mad- man than a wiſe and ſober Perſon, we muſt expect that he ſhould loſe his Temper, grow ſoure and melan- choly, and conſequently uneaſie to him- ſelf,

* Page 73. † Page 76.

ſelf, and every one that has any Thing to do with him. And is not this a Charming Proſpect of Things, and enough to induce a Man to part with his Religious Principles, that inſtead of behaving under Afflictions with Decency and Dignity, if we will turn *Atheiſts* we may hope to loſe our Tempers, grow impatient, contract a Sort of Diſlike and Abhorrence of every Body and every Thing: But if we deſire to keep our Tempers in all States of Life, and to do nothing that we ſhall have Reaſon to be aſhamed of, we muſt live and act with a View to the Principles of Religion; it being impoſſible with any other Principles to keep up a good Compoſure of the Affections, or any Uniformity in our Minds as the above mention'd Author obſerves.

EPICURUS himſelf could not forbear ſaying, that he thought it better to believe the Fable of the Heathen Gods than to ſubmit to that blind Neceſſity which our Modern *Atheiſts* ſeem to be ſo fond of (in his Letter to *Me-*

necæus given us by *Diogenes Laertius* in his Life) becauſe, he ſays, there is Hopes that the Gods may be prevailed upon by Worſhip and Prayer, but the other, *viz.* Neceſſity is deaf and inexorable to all Applications *. And tho' he did not much mend the Matter by his introducing the Clinamen or Oblique Motion of his Atoms, in order to ſecure the Liberty of our Minds, yet the Force of Truth extorted this Confeſſion from him, that the Fatality which *Leucippus* and *Democritus* had introduced, and which is ſtill maintained by our *Atheiſts* did reduce Mankind to a moſt hopeleſs and miſerable Condition; that it would be even better to embrace Superſtition for ſuch was the Heathen Mythology, than to be tied down to the Laws of an unrelenting Neceſſity.

THE

* Κρειττὸν ἦν τῷ περὶ Θεῶν μύθῳ, κατακολουθεῖν, ἢ τῶν φυσικῶν (meaning the *Stoicks*) εἱμαρμένη δουλεύειν, ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἐλπίδα παραιτήσεως ὑπογράφει Θεῶν δία τιμῆς, ἡ δὲ ἀπαραίτητον ἔχει τὴν ἀναγκὴν.

THE *Atheiſt* when he is called upon to give an Account of the general Conſent of Mankind in the Belief of a GOD and Providence is forced to aſſign ſuch Reaſons for it as plainly ſhew him very ſenſible of the Profitableneſs of Godlineſs or Religious Principles, as firſt *, When he accounts for the Introduction of Religion, by Mens Fears and Solicitude about Future Events; he muſt own it to be his Opinion that it would be for the Benefit of Mankind that ſome Being ſhould exiſt who could order and diſpoſe of all Events, to whom Men might addreſs themſelves for Relief, and in whom they might take Refuge, as being able to protect them againſt every Accident. Whereas the Fear and Concern about Future Events which themſelves ſuppoſe to be natural to us, would encreaſe upon us, grow worſe and worſe, if we were once perſuaded that Future Events were under no Direction but ſubject to the Caprices of Fortune or what would be as bad for us, the unalterable

* Primus in orbe Deos, fecit timor.

alterable Laws of a blind and unthinking Neceſſity, becauſe in ſuch a Caſe there is nothing to apply to, nothing to truſt in: For as theſe Atheiſtical Deities bring about every Thing without knowing all the while what they are doing, it can be to no Purpoſe to make any Application to them or hope for any Relief from them. In order to amend this ill State of Things the *Atheiſt* tells us Mankind found out this Expedient of making themſelves believe that there muſt be ſome other Agent beſides this material World, which they were ſure could not help them; and tho' they could not ſee him doing any Thing that yet he did all, directed the Motions of the Heavens, manag'd all Events here upon Earth, and was able and ready to relieve his Creatures when they called upon him for Help. What Proof we have for a GOD ſhall be afterwards ſhewn, by which it will appear to ſtand upon the beſt of Evidence, and therefore that Fear was not the onely Cauſe of introducing Religion among Men. It

is

is enough for my preſent Purpoſe that we have the *Atheiſt* acknowledging the Advantages of Religious Principles for ſupporting Men againſt the Fears of Future Evils, and conſequently the Being of a GOD and Providence is what of all Things ought to be deſired and wiſh'd for by us all.

ANOTHER Account they are wont to give of the General Conſent of Mankind in the Belief of a GOD is that Legiſlators and Politicians perſuaded Men there was a GOD as ſuch a Perſuaſion was thought to be the beſt Means of keeping Societies in order and in Obedience to the Laws. This too is a plain Acknowledgment from them of the Profitableneſs of Religious Principles, ſince the wiſeſt Men ſuch as the Founders of States were, ſaw no Way of ſecuring the Peace of Societies but by making the Principles of Religion a Part of the Civil Conſtitution; and Mr. *Hobbs* tells us how thoſe Religious Principles preſerved the Peace of Societies in as much as the People when they were under

any

any Misfortunes or Calamities, and were therefore most inclined to Mutiny, would not blame their Governors † but rather attribute their Misfortunes to their Want of Respect to GOD, to their Omission of some Religious Institution or some Mistake in performing it. I think a higher Commendation of Religious Principles cannot possibly be given than the making them necessary to the Peace of Societies. And the *Hobbist* above all others must acknowledge the Necessity of imbodying for our mutual Security, because according to his Scheme, every Man is an Enemy to every other Man in a State of Nature. Every Man has a Natural Right to whatever he can get by any Methods whatsoever; there being according to him no such Thing as

† Per has similesq; Institutiones ad finem suum, nempe Pacem Civitatis, hoc saltem obtinuerunt, ut populus Calamitates suas Errori alicui vel neglectui in agendis sacris — attribuens minus contra Rectores suos incitaretur, *Leviathan*, p. 60.

as Right and Wrong, Juſt and Unjuſt, before Men enter into Society, nor conſequently any Thing but their own Intereſt to hinder them from being a Plague and Vexation to each other. Having now ſeen ſome of the Advantages of Religious Principles for our Support in the uneaſy Parts of Life, it may be fit to ſee what thoſe Advantages are which the *Atheiſt* propoſes by his Scheme as an Equivalent for what by his own Confeſſion he muſt deprive himſelf and others of by his Disbelief of a GOD and Providence, and by endeavouring to draw others into the ſame Degree of Infidelity. *Plutarch* tells us his Deſign is to free himſelf from Fear, that he might ſtand in Awe of no Body, and be at full Liberty to do what he pleas'd †. This leads to the Second Advantage of Godlineſs, *viz.*

THAT the true and Genuine Notion of a GOD has nothing frightful in

† Τελος τὸ μὴ νομίζειν θεὸς, μὴ φοβᾶσθαι.

in it, that it reſtrains a Man in no Enjoyments but what would be hurtful to him and make him uneaſy, and therefore that a Man can be no Loſer by being a Believer, if it ſhould prove at laſt that there is to be no after State. That *Plutarch*'s Obſervation was a juſt one, or that the *Atheiſts* Unwillingneſs to admit a GOD ariſes from a frightful Notion that he entertains of him, is evident from the *Epicureans* continually repreſenting Religion as a grievous and heavy Burden. Thus *Velleius in Tully de Natura Deorum*, lib. 1. pag. 48. ſays, That thoſe who had introduced a Governor of the World, had made Mankind perfect Slaves *. So *Lucretius* in the Beginning of his firſt Book, repreſents Mankind as ſinking under the heavy Load of Religion, grovelling upon the Ground, not able to look up or lift up its Head for fear of the terrible Aſpect of a God appearing from

* Itaque impoſuiſtis in Cervicibus noſtris ſempiternum dominum, quem dies & noctes timeremus.

from above, and that this was the miserable Case of Man till *Epicurus* appeared *. And the same Writer speaks of *Epicurus*'s curing Men of the Fear of a GOD as the most signal Piece of Service that was ever done for Mankind †. But there is nothing can be more false than this Representation of GOD and Religion. 'Tis true indeed our Holy Writings speak of Religion under the Phrase of the Fear of GOD. But then this is not the Fear of an Arbitrary Being who has no regard to the Good and Welfare of others. 'Tis not the Fear of an Omnipotent Tyrant, that acts by Humour and Passion, but the Fear of a wise and good BEING, that always governs himself by the unalterable Rules of good Sense, such a Fear as should restrain Men from playing the Fool and hurting themselves, from violating the Laws of Reason, and confounding the Moral

* Primum Graius homo mortales tendere contra est Oculos ausus.

† Nos exæquat Victoria Cælo.

Moral Differences of Things. And ſuch a Fear no conſiderate Man ought to be concern'd at, for a Fear of this Kind is greatly for the Advantage of Mankind, as it tends to the keeping the World in Peace and good Order, and hindring them from injuring one another; 'tis the Fear of a juſt BEING who threatens Puniſhment for doing ſuch Things as would turn to our real Detriment; 'tis the Fear of a kind Father, who knowing better than ourſelves what is good for us and what would be miſchievous to us, leads us to our Happineſs and keeps us from hurting ourſelves by the Fear of offending him. This is the true and genuine Fear of a GOD; what Advantage then would it be to any Perſon if he were deliver'd from ſuch a Fear. Every Man that thinks at all would rejoice that there ſhould be ſuch an Object of his Fear as might keep his Paſſions and Appetites from doing him Harm, he would ſee that ſuch a Fear was ſo far from being Slavery, that 'tis conſiſtent with the trueſt

trueſt Liberty, and the beſt Preſervative of it, and that without it, it would ſcarce be poſſible to ſecure the Freedom of our Thoughts and Actions. Whenever this Fear is attended with Jealouſies and Suſpicions of the Deity, as an imperious and arbitrary BEING, that rather delights Himſelf in the Miſeries than the Happineſs of his Creatures, it then ceaſes to be a religi. ous, and commences a vicious Fear, or what we are wont to call Superſtition.

'TIS againſt this laſt Sort of Fear, that the Arguments of *Lucretius*, and of all Sorts of *Atheiſts* are directed. For they, laying it down as a certain Truth, That there is no ſuch Thing in Nature as Moral Differences, no Right or Wrong, Juſt or Unjuſt, ſeparate from Pleaſure and Pain, Convenience and Inconvenience, it would then indeed follow, That if there was a GOD, He could have no Moral Qualities, nor be oblig'd to act in Virtue of them. If there was a Being diſtinct from the World, and endu'd with a

Power of doing every Thing; yet there could not be a juſt Being, if there be no ſuch Thing as Juſtice (abſtracted from the Laws of Civil Government.) If there exiſted an infinite Intelligence, yet ſuch Intelligent Being could make no Diſtinction between Right and Wrong, if there really be no ſuch Thing as Right and Wrong in the Nature of Things; and then what ſhould we be the better for ſuch a Being? Or rather, ſhould we not probably fare better, if we were without ſuch a Governor as acts by mere Will and Pleaſure? That theſe Notions are juſtly charg'd upon the ancient and modern *Atheiſts*, may appear by a Quotation from each of them: *Cotta in Tully de Natura Deorum*, pag. 98. *Davies*'s Edit. tells us, one Opinion of the *Epicureans* was, That there was no ſuch Thing as Benevolence or an Obligation to do Acts of Kindneſs; but that whatever appears of this Kind, ariſes merely from Weakneſs *; and therefore, if there was

* Cum in imbecillitate gratificationem & benevolentiam ponitis.

was any ſuch Thing as a GOD, there could be no ſuch Thing as Love or Benevolence in him; becauſe as He would be all-powerful, He could want no one's Aſſiſtance, ſtand in Need of no Body, and therefore care for no Body. And thus again, Mr. *Hobbs* in his *Leviathan*, and his Book *De Cive*, p. 260, 262. founds all the Right that GOD has of Governing us, upon his Almighty Power; and all the Obligation that we have to obey him, upon this, That we cannot help it, his Power being irreſiſtible *.

THUS we ſee the *Atheiſts* Dreſſing up GOD in a frightful Shape, that they might have the better Colour for Denying his Exiſtence. But I have already ſhewn, that this is a falſe Repreſentation of Him; that when He is repreſented as He ought to be, and ſuch as He really is; that He is the moſt amiable BEING in the World; ſuch a

* Deo omnipotenti jus dominandi ab ipſa potentiâ derivatur: manifeſtum eſt Obligationem ad præſtandam ipſi Obedientiam incumbere hominibus propter imbecillitatem.

BEING as every conſiderate Man would heartily wiſh for, and would even part with all the World, rather than give up the Belief of Him; as the Want of ſuch a BEING would rob him of a moſt comfortable Proſpect in a Time of Difficulty and Diſtreſs, and in a Time of Proſperity take off that Reſtraint from his Appetites and Paſſions, which is abſolutely neceſſary to keep them from hurting him.

HITHERTO I have ſhewn the Profitableneſs of Religious Principles, and (*conſequently*) the Diſadvantages of thoſe of the *Atheiſts* on the Suppoſition, that they could fully perſuade themſelves of the Truth of their Scheme: But, if after all the Pains they take to diſown a GOD, they cannot ſet their Minds eaſy from the Fears of Him, then the Profitableneſs of living under a Senſe of Religious Principles, and the Diſadvantages of *Atheiſm*, will receive a new Degree of Evidence: Which was the third Advantage of Religious Principles that I propos'd to diſcourſe upon, *viz.* That the Belief of them will ſet the Religious

Religious Man's Mind at Eaſe with Regard to any Apprehenſions of an after State.

THE Hiſtories of all Times, and all Countries inform us, That there conſtantly has been a Belief of ſome future State, in which Men were to be accountable for their Behaviour in this. I am not now to conſider, Whether this Apprehenſion in Mankind be agreeable to the Truth of Things, or any good Proof of them: I am at this Time only to conſider, What Effects ſuch an Apprehenſion may have upon Mens Minds. And I think it muſt be granted me, That whilſt Men have ſuch Apprehenſions, they cannot be indifferent or unconcerned what is to become of them in this after State, no more than a Man can be indifferent with Regard to his Happineſs or Miſery in this preſent one. And therefore, unleſs the *Atheiſt* can give us a ſure and certain Method by which we may get entirely rid of ſuch Fears, he muſt acknowledge his Scheme to be neither calculated for the Good of himſelf nor any Body elſe.

For I have already ſhewn the Advantages of a true and genuine Fear of GOD, for the better Conduct of our Lives; and if the *Atheiſt* is willing to give up thoſe Advantages, ſo as he might free himſelf from the Fears of an after Reckoning, we might expect that he was ſure of gaining this Point: But the Hiſtories of all Ages ſhew us, that the Convictions of Mens Conſciences are not to be ſilenced by ſuch weak and trifling Reaſonings as the *Atheiſts* Scheme is built upon: The Apprehenſions of a future State have taken too deep Root in Mens Minds to be overturn'd by any Speculations of Men; and I will venture to ſay, That the *Atheiſt* himſelf, with all the Confidence he pretends to have in the Truth of his Scheme, cannot inſure himſelf for Life againſt the Fears of a future State, and for this plain Reaſon, That he cannot prove it to be impoſſible, that ſuch a Being as GOD (in the Religious Notion of the Word) ſhould exiſt: For if he cannot have an abſolute Certainty of that, neither can

he have any of the other. The Caſe being this, there can be no Difficulty in ſhewing, That the Principles of Religion are better calculated for the Eaſe of Mens Minds, with Regard to a future State, than thoſe of the *Atheiſt*. For the Man that lives under Religious Principles, has a comfortable Proſpect: If his Apprehenſions be juſt, he knows that he is made for ever, that his Happineſs will be beyond the utmoſt of his Conceptions, and the Continuance of it to all Eternity. And if his Thoughts of the Matter ſhould prove nothing but a Miſtake; yet his Belief has made him paſs off Life with more Satisfaction than *Atheiſm* can afford a Man, and it can be at laſt no worſe with him than the other.

LET us now take a View of the Unbeliever, with Regard to the Apprehenſions of a future State: As I have already obſerv'd, That he cannot demonſtrate the Impoſſibility of a Life after the Concluſion of this preſent one, the Suppoſition of its being *barely* poſſibly to be true, muſt give him now and then an uneaſy Thought, for Fear

that Poſſibility ſhould ariſe; and whenever ſuch a troubleſome Thought diſturbs him, I know of no other Way he can take to make himſelf eaſy, but by perſuading himſelf, either 1ſt, That no Man is under any Obligation of Reverencing or Honouring GOD, tho' there ſhould be One; or elſe, if he dares not truſt to that, That *he* is under no Obligation, becauſe not believing there is a GOD, he cannot pay any Reverence to Him. As to the firſt of theſe Excuſes, I believe the *Atheiſt* will find it hard enough to make himſelf believe, that no Man is under an Obligation of honouring Him, if there really be One; for if there be ſuch a BEING, the Relation that we ſtand in to Him, and the Obligations we have received from Him, will make it fit for us to expreſs our Thankfulneſs and Acknowledgments to Him.

I AM ſenſible Unbelievers do not allow what we call moral Differences; but then this is upon Suppoſition that their Material Scheme is the true one, and that there is no GOD, or no Supreme

preme BEING endued with Moral Perfections. But if there ſhould be ſuch a BEING, the *Atheiſt* may be, for any thing he knows, anſwerable to this BEING for denying his Exiſtence, and in Conſequence of that, for paying no Reverence nor Acknowledgments to Him for the Favours received from Him. For if there are any moral Differences in the Nature of Things, and they are judg'd of by the Supreme Underſtanding ſuch as by other underſtanding Beings, making only an Abatement for the Difference between a finite and infinite Underſtanding; that is, Suppoſe we know what Juſtice is in GOD, we muſt believe that it is unjuſt to deny Reverence to the Supreme BEING, as well as it would be Injuſtice to refuſe our Acknowledgments to any Friend or Benefactor for any Kindneſſes we had received from him. And it can't be thought but that the Supreme (as well as other Beings) muſt make a Difference between thoſe that honour Him, and thoſe that deny his Being and Authority over them. For if GOD has

conſtituted

conſtituted any moral Differences in Things, He has thereby ſufficiently declared that it is his Intention to act ſuitably to thoſe Differences. The Thing is ſo evident, that the Learned and Unlearned have agreed in honouring the the DEITY. *Tully* has long ago told it as a certain and undoubted Truth, That if there is a Supreme and Eternal BEING, He is to be had in the greateſt Reverence and Admiration by Mankind *. And even *Epicurus* † himſelf wrote a Book of Piety towards the Gods. If he wrote this Book for no other Reaſon than to ſcreen himſelf from the Publick Odium, yet it ſhews thus much, That it was the general Belief of People at that Time, that the DEITY ought to be honoured. And that this Belief was well-grounded, will afterwards appear, when I come to prove a real Difference in the Nature of Things between Virtue and Vice. *Vide* Serm. XI.

* Tully de Natura Deorum. Lib. 1.
† De Divinatione. Lib. 2.

I CANNOT forbear making one Remark from what has been ſaid, which is this: That ſuppoſing there are any Perſons of ſo perverſe an Underſtanding, as cannot perſuade themſelves of a GOD and Providence, that they ſhould not give themſelves much Trouble in drawing Men off from ſuch a Belief; becauſe, by their own Confeſſion, Mankind was brought into this Belief for their own Good, that they might relieve themſelves from the Uneaſineſſes which human Nature is ſubject to. If they make any Pretenſions to Good-nature, or have any Love for their Species, they ſhould be contented to believe themſelves in the right, without uſing any Endeavors to draw other Perſons into a Scheme which is ſo diſmal and without all Comfort, as theirs is; they can lie under no Obligations of Conſcience, becauſe they make ſhew of Denying all moral Differences; and therefore if they were not a Set of ſour and ill-natured People, they would be contented to be miſerable by themſelves, and leave the reſt of Mankind in the quiet Poſ-

ſeſſion

ſeſſion of ſo agreeable a Deluſion as that of a GOD and future State. I can ſee but one Thing they can urge for themſelves, which is, That tho' a right Notion of Religion would be really beneficial to Mankind, yet Superſtition is more deſtructive of the publick as well as private Quiet of every Man than *Atheiſm* itſelf: And for the Truth of this, they refer you to *Plutarch* in his Treatiſe, περὶ δεισιδαιμονίας, and to the viſible Effects of it, wherever it has prevailed. They add further, That the Hiſtories of every Age have convinced them, that Mankind is a Creature that is more apt to be influenced by a ſuperſtitious, than by a religious Fear. And therefore, the Odds in human Nature being on the Side of Superſtition that 'tis not ſafe truſting it with any Religion. The Anſwer to this is very eaſy, That if the Fears of Superſtition, are the only Reaſon of his rejecting religious Principles, then inſtead of ſetting himſelf againſt all Religion, let him endeavour to ſet the World right in their Notions of Religion, and we will heartily

tily joyn with him in ſo laudable an Undertaking. And, as I hope the Danger of Mens falling into Superſtition may be much leſſen'd by our joynt Endeavours; ſo I am ſure, the above-mentioned Advantages of true Religion will ſufficiently juſtify us in the Attempt.

SERMON II.

1 THESSALONIANS V. 21.

Prove all Things: hold fast that which is good.

THE Reasonableness of Observing this Rule of our Apostle, is grounded upon this undoubted Matter of Fact, That there has been always a Mixture of Truth and Falsehood in the World: That there have always been Persons who have endeavour'd to propagate false, as well as true Doctrines, and therefore no Safety in holding fast any Opinions, before we have carefully prov'd and examin'd them.

IF our Apoſtle might have a particular View to the trying of Revelations or divine Inſpirations; yet this Advice of his will equally extend to every Subject that is propoſed to our Conſideration; and if we are guided by it, we ſhall never give our Aſſent to any Propoſition, till we have fully and fairly examin'd it; For if, as in the preſent Caſe, which the Apoſtle ſeems particularly to referr to, we ſuppoſe a Man led into Error by ſome mere Pretender to Inſpiration, if it would not, I ſay, be a good Excuſe before GOD, that he believed ſuch a Perſon inſpired, and practiſed amiſs in the Virtue of ſuch a Belief, becauſe he ought to have examin'd his Credentials, and proved his Spirit, whether it was of GOD, or not; neither would it be a good Juſtification of a Man, if he ſhould plead, That he acted ſuitably to his own Opinions; unleſs 'twas alſo true, that he had carefully examined them before he eſpouſed them; becauſe every Man will be as much concerned to avoid Miſtakes concerning the Truths of Natural, as well as thoſe

thoſe of Revealed Religion. And he that aſſents to either upon any other Motive than that of Evidence, altho' he ſhould embrace the Truth, as this is purely accidental, may be anſwerable to GOD for not making a due Uſe of his Faculties: for St. *Paul*'s *Rule* is, To *prove all Things*: *and* then to *hold faſt that which is good.*

WE who are guided by St. *Paul* and the reſt of the inſpired Teachers, do require, and preſs upon all Perſons a thorough Examination of the Arguments on which Religion is built: We deſire nothing more than a fair Trial, and are willing to abide by the Succeſs of it. And therefore the Author of the Diſcourſe of *Free-Thinking*, is a Slanderer of his Brethren, when he would inſinuate, as if the Religious Man was averſe to a free and impartial Examination of Religious Truths. We deſire Men would examine with the utmoſt Strictneſs; we only deſire them to lay aſide all Partiality, and every Prejudice; we are only againſt Licentiouſneſs in Thinking, as we are

perſuaded, That a Man may as well abuſe his Freedom in Thinking, as he may his Liberty in Acting; as I ſhall have Occaſion to ſhew in Conſidering another Evaſion the *Atheiſt* has to avoid the Apprehenſions of a future State, *viz.* That a Man cannot deſerve Blame or Puniſhment, ſo long as he acts conſiſtently with his own Opinion, or that himſelf cannot deſerve Blame or Puniſhment for not Honouring GOD, becauſe he does not believe there is one.

FOR if this Excuſe be a good one, one of theſe two Things muſt be true, either *1ſt*, That a Man cannot deſerve Blame for acting according to his Opinions, how groundleſs ſoever they be, Or, *2dly*, Becauſe he had made a due Examination and Trial of this Queſtion, and could find no Evidence for a GOD.

AS to the firſt of theſe: Let us ſee what Grounds the *Atheiſt* can have to hope for Impunity, merely becauſe he acts according to his Opinion, when he refuſes Reſpect to a Supreme BEING.

I MUST confeſs, I cannot ſee much in the Argument uſed by ſome great Men againſt incurring this Blame and Puniſhment, *viz.* they adviſe the *Atheiſt*, That he ſhould ſtrive to have Faith and believe to the utmoſt; becauſe, if after all there be nothing in the Matter, there will be no Harm in being thus deceived; but if there be any thing, it will be fatal for him not to have believed to the full: And my Reaſon is this: Becauſe the Perſon we adviſe to believe, is ſuppoſed at beſt to be doubtful, whether there is a GOD and Providence; And how then can the Man believe them, who at the ſame time is not perſuaded of their Truth; but rather believes there is no ſuch Thing? For if a Man ſhould affect to believe, what he does not believe, there is little Reaſon for thinking that ſuch a Procedure would be agreeable to GOD; becauſe this would be acting againſt the Light of his own Mind, which no one that believes a GOD, will ſuppoſe to be a probable Way of recommending any one to his Favour.

I SHOULD rather adviſe the *Atheiſt* to examine carefully, What were the real Motives that prevailed upon him to quit the Religion he had been educated in, and to take up with Infidelity? Whether a ſincere Love of the Truth, or rather ſome ſecret Paſſion had influenced him? If he would deal fairly with himſelf in this Self-examination, I am perſuaded he would find, that the Alteration of his Opinion is not ſo much owing to any rational Conviction of his Mind, as to ſome vicious Inclinations, which had made Arguments appear weighty to him, which would paſs with other People for mean and trifling; as I ſhall afterwards ſhew when I come to conſider the Arguments by which he pretends to ſupport his Material Scheme.

IN the mean time I am to ſhew, That there are many Motives beſides rational Evidence, which have determin'd Men to the Opinions that they eſpouſe, and conſequently, that this Evaſion of the *Atheiſt*, *viz.* That a Man cannot deſerve Blame or Puniſhment for

for acting agreeably to his Opinions, cannot be relied upon by any prudent or conſiderate Man. And then the *Atheiſt* can never ſecure himſelf againſt the Apprehenſions of future Puniſhment upon this Foot of Reaſoning.

WHEN I am ſhewing, that a Man may be anſwerable for his Opinions, and for what he does in Virtue of them; I would not be thought to aſſert, That 'tis in any Man's Power to believe what he has a mind to believe; for his Belief and his Opinion muſt depend upon the Evidence, ſuch as it appears to the Man; and yet thus much is certain, That a Man may deſerve Blame for his Opinions, if he has not duly qualified himſelf for Evidence when 'tis offered to him. As,

1*ſt*, IF when he is enquiring after Truth, he ſuffers himſelf to be byaſs'd by any predominant Paſſion or Appetite; for theſe are known to make Men deaf to the plaineſt Evidence of Reaſon. Or,

2*dly*, IF thro' Lazineſs he declines a full or thorough Examination of any

Queſtion in which he is much concerned. That theſe may be, and often are, the true Cauſes of many Perſons Infidelity, will appear probable, by conſidering ſome of the Motives which too often govern Men, with Regard to the Perſuaſions or Opinions that are held by them: The Prejudices which I ſhall at preſent conſider, as having a great Influence upon us, and which may lead Men into an Inclination for the Principles of Infidelity, are theſe:

1. AN Affectation of Singularity; which is wont to take much with ſuch Perſons as deſire to be diſtinguiſhed by being thought to ſee farther than their Neighbours.

2. AN Averſion to the Errors that have crept into true Religion, has inſenſibly led many Perſons into a total Disbelief of all Religion.

3. A DESIRE of being independent, and uncontroulable by any one; When this meets with Perſons of an imperious Temper, 'tis a ſtrong Temptation to Infidelity.

WHENEVER

WHENEVER any of these prevail, they must be allowed to be false Grounds of Persuasion, and for which a Man will be justly accountable, if there be a Supreme BEING to whom an Account is to be given for the Use, or Abuse of our understanding Faculties.

1st. AN Affectation of Singularity is wont to have a powerful Influence upon a Man's Opinions, especially when it meets with a proud Temper.

A MAN must have pass'd his Life without much Reflection upon human Nature, that has not observed, That Men are more commonly influenced, as to the Opinions they hold, by some predominant Passion, than by any Conviction from the Principles of Reason. The striking out into a different Way of Thinking from the rest of Mankind, flatters the Vanity of a proud Man with this pleasing Imagination, That he shall be thought to see farther than any Body else. For he that contradicts any received Notions, expects the World should believe, that he does so, because he reasons with greater Freedom and Im-

partiality than other People; and the more generally received the Opinions are which he oppoſes, the greater Credit he hopes to gain by it; and therefore, Religion having been the general Perſuaſion of Mankind, is for that Reaſon the fitteſt Mark for the proud Man to point his Arguments againſt; for the Fewer he has on his Side, the more he hopes to ſhine, as he knows a Man is apt to be loſt in a Croud, and that if he would be taken Notice of, he muſt ſtand ſingle, or have but Few in his Company.

THE Author of the Diſcourſe about *Free-thinking*, has *acknowledged* this ſecret Temptation to Infidelity, when he would put it off as the common Opinion of Mankind, that the *Atheiſt* has more Senſe than other People. *For*, ſays he, *if any good Chriſtian happens to Reaſon better than ordinary, they* (meaning the Chriſtians) *charge him with Atheiſm.* He takes this ſly Way of commending the *Atheiſts* for good Reaſoners, in ſuggeſting that thoſe very Perſons who believed a GOD and future State,

State, could not forbear owning *Atheiſm* to be the Effect of good Reaſoning, and the *Atheiſts* better Reaſoners than other People. How weak and groundleſs ſoever this Notion may be of Mens being better Reaſoners in proportion as they believed leſs of a GOD and Providence; yet thus much may be obſerved from it to my preſent Purpoſe, That ſome Perſons may have been, and ſtill are tempted to appear on the Side of Infidelity, from the vain Hopes of being thought more diſcerning and ſagacious than the reſt of the World.

MONSIEUR *Bayle*, whoſe Writings will free him from any Suſpicion of being overpartial in the Cauſe of Religion, does honeſtly acknowledge, That the Infidelity of many People is owing more to ſome Degree of Vanity, and a Deſire of diſtinguiſhing themſelves, than to any Force of Evidence: and nothing can be truer than what he has ſaid upon this Occaſion in his *Hiſtorical Dictionary*, "It is plain enough, *ſays he*, "that thoſe who make a Shew in "Company of oppoſing the moſt

"common

" common Truths of Religion, ſpeak " what they do not really think; their " Vanity has a greater Share in their " Debates than any Conviction of their " own Minds; they pleaſe themſelves " with the Thoughts that the Boldneſs " and Singularity of the Opinions which " they defend, will gain them the Repu- " tation of great Genius's, and of Men " of a ſuperior Way of Thinking to " the reſt of Mortals. Thus they are " tempted againſt their Conſciences to " ſet forth the Difficulties which the " Doctrines of Providence and thoſe of " the Goſpel are ſubject to; ſo that by " Degrees they get a Habit of ſpeaking " impiouſly: And if their Vanity be " attended with the Love of Senſua- " lity, they go on faſter in their Im- " piety". Thus far Mr. *Bayle* ſpeaks in relation to an ingenious *French* Libertine, and to all of that Sort in the Title *Des Barreaux*. The *Atheiſt* has perhaps heard too, That the *Epicurean Atheiſt* was wont to impute the Belief of a GOD to Mens Ignorance of the Powers of Matter in Motion;

Motion; and therefore hopes by the Denial of Him, to acquire a great Reputation for Knowledge.

ANOTHER common Fountain from whence Infidelity is wont to ariſe, is, An Averſion to Superſtition. Some Men do no ſooner diſcover the Errors that are crept into true Religion, than they conceive ſuch an Averſion to theſe Errors, as that they begin to ſuſpect all the reſt to be a Miſtake, and from being Enemies to Superſtition, become Enemies to all Religion in general. This I take to be the moſt uſual Way by which Men arrive at a State of Infidelity; but this is an unjuſtifiable Proceding in any one that pretends to be a Lover of Truth; becauſe it ſuppoſes that where there are Errors, there can be no Truth. There are Errors in all Communities of Men profeſſing Religion, therefore there can be no Truth at all in Religion itſelf; Men have made great Miſtakes in the Pictures they have drawn for the DEITY, therefore there can be no DEITY at all; becauſe they are ſure there cannot be a GOD with human

human Weakneſſes, therefore there cannot be one with divine Perfections; They might with as much Juſtice argue, That becauſe there is a Wrong, there can be no ſuch Thing as a Right.

BUT they are not only unjuſtifiable, when they have no better Reaſon for leaving us, but alſo (which I believe will concern the *Atheiſt* more, becauſe it reflects upon his Underſtanding) they ſhew great Weakneſs when they are byaſs'd to Infidelity by their Averſion to Superſtition, as this ſhews a great Defect in Point of Judgment. For when Men flee from one Extream to the other, when they take Refuge in *Atheiſm* out of an Hatred to Superſtition, the Reaſon muſt be becauſe they know not how to diſtinguiſh what is true from what is falſe. They find they have not Skill enough to take off the Diſguiſe from Religion, to ſeparate the Appearance from the Reality; and therefore finding they muſt take all or none; the Hatred they have conceived againſt the Errors they have already detected,

rected, prompts them to quit Religion entirely, as the only Way for ſuch poor Reaſoners to be ſecure againſt Errors in Religious Matters. This is the true Reaſon and Foundation of that Obſervation ſo often made, That where there is moſt Superſtition, as in *Italy*, *Atheiſts* are moſt frequent; becauſe the Generality of People are apt to conceive ſo ſtrong a Prejudice againſt any Cauſe, how juſt ſoever, when they diſcover any Fraud uſed in the Support of it, that they immediately conclude the whole to be a Cheat. Their Averſion for the Fraud, makes them overlook all the Arguments that can be given them for the Support of the Truth; as if it was an Impoſſibility in the Nature of the Thing, for evil Men to defend the Truth by a Falſhood. But this has ſo often happened in the World, that no Man can be accounted a fair Examiner that rejects Religion merely upon this Account.

3*dly*, A DESIRE of being uncontroul'd and unaccountable as to their Thoughts and Behaviour, tempts ſome Perſons to the

the Denial of GOD's Exiſtence. Men of haughty and imperious Tempers would be Monarchs to themſelves, they care not to believe themſelves obliged to any Body, and therefore are fond of the Material Scheme, as it ſets them at full Liberty from all Obligations; for no one can think himſelf obliged to any Being merely for doing for him what it can't help doing. Atoms by luckily jumbling together for my Good, or the neceſſary and unalterable Laws of Matter in Motion producing all that we ſee, tho' I received never ſo much Benefit from them, could lay me under no Obligation of Gratitude to them; I ſhould ſtill be under the fulleſt Liberty of Thinking and Acting as I liked beſt; (if any ſuch thing as Liberty were conſiſtent with either of thoſe Schemes) But if a Man ſhould acknowledge an Intelligent BEING for his Creator and the Author of all the Comforts he meets with in Life, he cannot forbear thinking ſometimes that ſome ſuch Submiſſion may be due to

Him

Him, as may reſtrain his Fulneſs of Freedom in Thinking and Acting.

AND this St. *Evremont*, who was never thought to be troubled with Believing too much in Religious Matters, acknowledges might be a Temptation to Perſons of an imperious Temper; if he was truly the Author of a Treatiſe aſcribed to him *, where it is ſaid, "That there are others who in an "extravagant Preſumption of their own "Abilities, ſcorn to depend on their "MAKER; vainly imagining, that the "Obedience that is paid to this Infi-"nite MAJESTY, muſt neceſſarily take "away the Freedom of their Thoughts "or Opinions." We have already ſeen by the Confeſſion of *Lucretius* †, that the Deſire of being in a State of Independence, and of having none to controul them, was a great Inducement to many Perſons to enter themſelves in the School of *Epicurus*; and we cannot doubt but the ſame Cauſe is ſtill

* Vid. Curious Miſcellanies. † Sermon I.

ſtill working the ſame Effect in the Children of Diſobedience: Eſpecially as to thoſe who are Libertines in Action as well as Thought, who deſire to gratify every irregular Appetite, and to extinguiſh the Clamours of their Conſciences, 'tis their Intereſt to throw off the Belief of a GOD and turn *Atheiſts*: as long as they have any Reaſon left, they muſt for Peace and Quietneſs Sake endeavour to perſwade themſelves, that there is no Superior Underſtanding to take notice of and animadvert upon them for acting againſt the Senſe of their own Minds. *Atheiſm* is the only Refuge they have to take to; for ſo long as Men will act againſt their own Underſtandings, they muſt wiſh that there were no Underſtanding Being to obſerve what they are doing: but theſe are the Fools, which the *Pſalmiſt* tells us have *ſaid in their Hearts, that there is no God.*

THE Uſe that I would make of this, ſhould be to adviſe the *Atheiſt*, That ſince there are confeſſedly vicious Motives that have led Men into their Opinions, that

that he would examine, whether none of thoſe I have already mentioned had determin'd him to exchange the Religion he was brought up in for *Atheiſm*. For if he has left it without ſufficient Reaſon, his pleading that he acts according to his Opinion, will not excuſe him from Blame and Puniſhment.

I AM eaſy to believe, that the *Infidel* will diſregard the Adviſe I have given him of examining what were the Motives that principally occaſioned his Infidelity, and may think, that his Miſtake, if it ſhould prove ſuch, can do him no Harm. I ſhall therefore chuſe to put him in mind of what Monſieur *Bayle* ſays of ſuch as have been drawn into Infidelity thro' any vicious Motives, particularly thoſe he inſtances of Pride or Senſuality in his *Hiſtorical Dictionary*, Title *Des Barreaux*: "That evil "Cuſtom, *ſays he*, which ſome Perſons "had taken up in Converſation of oppo-"ſing the great Truths of Religion, oc-"caſion'd either by Vanity, or a Deſire "of being thought more knowing than

" thers, or to juſtify themſelves in their " Senſuality, may for ſome time ſilence " the inward Convictions of their Minds, " and make them to have entirely for- " got what they had learnt in their " Youth concerning a GOD, a Hea- " ven and a Hell: but they cannot " wholly extinguiſh the Belief of them, " it being only like a Fire concealed " under the Aſhes, which will quickly " ſhew its Activity, eſpecially when " there is any Proſpect of Danger; " then, *ſays he*, we find them Trem- " bling, and more in Fear than any " body elſe; they become then even " ſuperſtitious:" And he gives this Reaſon for it; " That the Remembrance " of their having ſhewn more Con- " tempt for Holy Things than others, " increaſes their Uneaſineſs." If this Obſervation of Monſieur *Bayle*'s be juſt and agreeable to Truth, the Advice I have given the *Atheiſt* of examining the Motives that induced him to renounce Religion, may not be altogether amiſs. Becauſe whatever he may think while he is in Health, and out of Danger, he

cannot

cannot ſecure himſelf againſt the Apprehenſions of Puniſhment, if he has wantonly taken up the Cauſe of Infidelity.

BUT ſome one may ſay, That this Way of arguing againſt *Atheiſts*, is entring into the Hearts of Men, and charging them with what may be as eaſily denied as affirmed; that it is an unfair Procedure with them, becauſe 'tis taking for granted, that a Man muſt be influenced by ſome Prejudices whenever he embraces *Atheiſm*; that this might be with equal Juſtice retorted upon the Believer, that he too is prejudiced, and willing againſt Evidence to believe a GOD, becauſe he wiſhes there was one, and thinks it would be better for him that there ſhould be one; and therefore that the Argument drawn from Prejudices ſhould be omitted by both Sides.

THE Anſwer is, That I ought to ſhew, if I could, that other Motives beſides Evidence, might influence Men in their Opinions; that ſuch Motives were vicious and puniſhable if there ſhould be

a GOD: And this, in order to engage the *Atheiſt* to examine carefully upon what Motives he took up his Opinions: If the Religious Man is under a ſtrong Prejudice to believe a GOD, and he ſhould be miſtaken, his Miſtake cannot be dangerous or hurtful to him. I ought alſo not to have omitted theſe Prejudices as probable Motives to Infidelity, becauſe many of thoſe who ſeem to diſown all Religion, have been (as we have alrady ſeen from the Confeſſion of unſuſpected Writers) influenced by ſome or other of them.

IF there are any others who have from any thing like a ſerious Conſideration wrought themſelves into a Belief, That this Frame of Things might have either caſually fallen into the Order we find it in, or neceſſarily have exiſted ſuch as it is from all Eternity, they are not concerned with what has been ſaid under the Head of Prejudices, and ſhall be diſtinctly conſidered by themſelves, when I come to conſider another Evaſion of the *Atheiſts*, *viz.* That after the beſt Enquiry, he could

could find no Evidence for a GOD, and therefore could deserve neither Blame nor Punishment for being consistent with himself, in not paying any Respect to One whom he did not acknowledge for GOD.

HAVING considered certain Prejudices which might be supposed to have determined many of those who have espoused the Cause of *Atheism*, it cannot be amiss to put them in mind, That their Ancestors in Infidelity supported their Principles by Reasons which our Modern *Atheists* must acknowledge to be false, and therefore were certainly to blame in concluding against a GOD upon such Reasonings, as a further and more careful Examination into Nature would have discovered to be false. This should discourage the modern *Atheist* from being over-confident in his Scheme, lest further Discoveries in Knowledge should make his Cause less defensible, and himself culpable for determining hastily against a GOD, before a full and thorough Examination of the several Particulars on which he is wont to

ground his Infidelity. Which brings me to conſider another Defect in trying any Queſtion, *viz.*

2dly, THAT we deſerve Blame, if thro' Lazineſs we decline a thorough Examination before we take up our Opinions.

IT cannot be doubted that there are in the world Half-Thinkers as well as Free-Thinkers; ſuch as lead themſelves into Miſtakes, either becauſe they want Abilities or Inclination to make a cloſe Inquiry into Things. The great Lord *Bacon* places *Atheiſm* to the account of Short-Thinking, to a ſmattering in Philoſophy. I know our modern Unbelievers would think themſelves greatly injured if we charged them with any Want of Ability, and ſo would their Predeceſſors; for we find *Lucretius* perpetually Talking with ſuch an Air of Aſſurance, as if he had actually wreſted the Thunderbolt out of *Jupiter*'s Hands; and yet he appears to have been a careleſs Examiner into Nature, when he accounted for the Production of Animals from inſenſible Mat-

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ter, by Worms ariſing from corrupted Carcaſſes; which was the only Account he could give of Animal Productions, *viz.* of Life and Senſation *; And yet our preſent *Atheiſts* muſt acknowledge, That he pronounced in this Caſe as a poor Philoſopher, and before he had made a fair Examination: For I think Equivocal Generations are now generally given up. This therefore muſt paſs with our Unbelievers for a Proof, That their Anceſtors were in this Reſpect Short-Thinkers, and took up their Opinions upon inſufficient Motives.

THERE is another Inſtance may be given, in which the *Atheiſts* have taken up their Opinions before their having made a due Examination; which is this: That nothing could act upon Matter but by Contact; from thence they inferred, there could be no real

* Quippe videre licet vivos exiſtere vermes, ſtercore de tetro putrorem cum ſibi nacta eſt, &c.

Being but Matter, or, which would be the ſame thing, that if there was any thing immaterial in Nature, it could have nothing to do with the Material World; becauſe Matter could be acted upon in no other Way but by Contact, and then nothing but Matter could act upon Matter; and conſequently, an Immaterial Being, which could not act in the Way of Contact, could have no Efficiency or Action upon Matter: But a farther Examination into the Laws by which Nature is govern'd, has convinced the World, that Bodies themſelves can act upon one another at the greateſt Diſtance from each other, and in another Way than that of *Contact*; and then it muſt be allowed, that the Argument built upon it was form'd before a due Examination had been made into the Nature of Things.

A VERY Learned Man and a great Thinker in our Time, who had aſſerted, "That we might as well con-"ceive that GOD might have added "a Thinking Quality to Matter, as

"make

" make a material Subſtance capable of " Acting or being acted upon by an " Immaterial one; becauſe there could " be no relation of Contact between " ſuch heterogeneous Subſtances;" was afterwards convinced, that there was another Way than that of Contact by which Bodies might be acted upon; as may be ſeen in his *Poſthumous Letters*.

THE Uſe that I would make of this, is, That in a Matter of ſo great Concern as that of a GOD and Providence, the Unbeliever would ſuffer himſelf to be perſuaded to re-examine his Concluſions, and ſee whether he has not been deceived in any of his Premiſes. he ſees his Predeceſſors in Infidelity by a cloſer Inſpection into Nature, ſtripp'd of ſome Part of that Armour in which they truſted *moſt*: And how can he be ſure, that farther Enquiries into Nature may not ſtill weaken his Cauſe? And if thro' Lazineſs he ſhould decline ſuch Enquiries, and his Opinions ſhould at laſt prove falſe, his Neglect will be Criminal,

Criminal, and himself answerable for not taking due Information, before he took his Opinions *for Better, for Worse.*

SERMON III.

1 THESSALONIANS V. 21.

Prove all Things: hold fast that which is good.

I HAVE already in diſcourſing upon theſe Words ſhewn how we muſt prepare ourſelves for a fair Examination of any Queſtion; that we muſt, previouſly to our Inquiries, diveſt ourſelves of every Prejudice and Paſſion, ſuffer no Inclinations, nor any Deſires, but thoſe of finding the Truth, to influence our Judgments: That we muſt be contented

tented in Queſtions of great Moment, to undergo the Fatigue of a full and careful Examination, and not thro' Lazineſs decline a thorough Search into the Arguments on both Sides, or draw our Concluſions before we have well conſidered our Premiſes.

I HAVE ſhewn that the Want of obſerving theſe Rules, doth often lead Men into Errors; and that the greateſt and worſt of all Errors, *viz.* Infidelity, would decreaſe in its Numbers, and loſe a great Part of its Proſelytes, whenever the World ſhall reſolve to take up their Opinions from no other Principle but a ſincere Love of the Truth. That the *Atheiſt* ought to lay his Hand upon his Heart, and declare if he can, That nothing but a Love for the Truth *had* determin'd him to exchange Religion for *Atheiſm*; and that it concerns him to be ſincere in ſuch a Declaration; becauſe every other Reaſon for making the Exchange, would render him a Criminal for the Abuſe of thoſe Faculties of his Mind which

which would have directed him better.

I AM now to consider the other Excuse the *Atheist* is wont to make, That he has made the best Enquiry he can, without being able to discover any Evidence for a GOD.

BUT before I consider what those have to say for themselves, who pretend to have taken up *Atheism* after a serious Consideration of Things, I must insist upon this, as a Preliminary to the Debate, That the *Atheist* ought not to bring against us any such Objections, whose whole Strength arises merely from our Incapacity of conceiving the Nature and Operations of GOD; and for this plain Reason, Because 'tis agreed betwixt us, that we are finite or limited Beings; and must therefore have limited Understandings: But that the necessarily existing BEING, whoever He is, must be an Infinite and Eternal One, filling all Time and all Place. For there is no denying that Something must have been from Eternity; because if it were not so, Something

thing must have arisen absolutely from Nothing, or existed without having any Cause or Reason of its Existence: Which is plainly impossible. And yet 'tis certain, we can form no Notion of an eternal Duration already past; an Argument therefore drawn from our Inability to conceive the Nature of a BEING that has actually existed from Eternity, or to comprehend its Manner of Operation, ought to have no Weight with *us*, nor be urg'd by the *Atheist*, because his Material God would be equally affected by it. If then he would justify himself, the only rational Inducements that can possibly be assign'd for exchanging Religion for *Atheism*, must be one or other of these:

EITHER for the avoiding some particular Difficulties, which he thinks may be proved to amount to Impossibilities in our Notion of a GOD, and which too his Material Scheme is not attended with:

OR else, because in general there are far less Difficulties to be gotten over

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in accounting for Appearances by the material Scheme, than there would be, ſhould we once admit a GOD and Providence. Theſe are the only juſtifiable Inducements that can be aſſigned for quitting Religion and embracing *Atheiſm*. And if the firſt of theſe ſhould appear to be ſuch as cannot be defended, and the other to be falſe in Fact; then it muſt be granted, that the *Atheiſt* has not taken up his Material Hypotheſis after a fair Examination; and will be therefore highly culpable for not acting with that Ingenuity which becomes a Lover of Truth.

AS to the firſt of theſe Inducements, I will ſhew, That it can never juſtify him in rejecting Religion.

1ſt, BECAUSE he can never prove that the particular Difficulties he complains of, do amount to an Impoſſibility or a Contradiction.

2dly, BECAUSE his Material Scheme which he takes up with for avoiding thoſe Difficulties, is attended with infinitely greater ones than thoſe which he finds

finds fault with in our Notion of a GOD.

AND then, as to the other Inducement, *viz.* That in general, there are fewer Difficulties in accounting for Things by a Material Principle; I will ſhew, that ſome of the moſt conſiderable *Phænomena* in Nature, cannot be accounted for by ſuch a Principle only.

THE firſt Inducement for embracing *Atheiſm*, is not defenſible, becauſe the *Atheiſt* can never prove, That the particular Difficulties he complains of in our Notion of a GOD, do amount to an Impoſſibility or a Contradiction. The chief Difficulties which the *Atheiſt* is wont to charge upon our Idea of a GOD, are theſe:

1*ſt*, THAT we aſcribe Immateriality to Him.

2*dly*, THAT we allow Him a Power of making Something out of Nothing: Both which are thought by him to be impoſſible, whenever they are ſuppoſed to be the Nature or the Operations of any Thing whatſoever. And

3*dly*, BECAUSE we make Goodneſs a Part of his Character; which they think

think to be ſufficiently contradicted by the many Natural and Moral Evils that appear in his Workmanſhip.

1ſt, I AM to conſider the Difficulties which are raiſed againſt a GOD from his Immateriality. If the *Atheiſt* would prove an immaterial or incorporeal Subſtance to be impoſſible or a Contradiction; in order to prove it ſuch, he muſt undertake the Proof of this Propoſition, "Whatever is immaterial, is "Nothing." And therefore an immaterial Subſtance, a mere *Non Entity*. And he muſt prove this, one of theſe two Ways; either, That what we have no Idea of, can have no Exiſtence in the Nature of Things; that we have no Idea of an immaterial Subſtance, therefore there can be no ſuch Thing. Or elſe he muſt affirm, That the only ſubſtantial Thing in the World is Matter or Body; and therefore an incorporeal Subſtance would be the ſame thing as an incorporeal Body: Which muſt be a Contradiction in Terms.

THE Anſwer we give to the firſt of theſe Objections, is, That we cannot

allow them to ſpeak Truth, if they affirm, That we have no Conception of an immaterial Subſtance. *2dly*, That if it were a Truth, it could not be a good Proof of the Impoſſibility of its Exiſtence.

As to the firſt of theſe Objections, we are perſuaded, That we as certainly know ſome of the Properties of immaterial, as we do thoſe of material Subſtance; that Perception, Underſtanding, and a Power of beginning Motion, are as certainly the Properties of an immaterial Subſtance, as Solidity, and a Capacity of receiving and communicating Motion are Properties of Matter or Body. I know the *Atheiſt* would make all theſe Properties of immaterial Subſtance, to be only Qualities reſulting from Matter. But as I ſhall afterwards have Occaſion to ſhew, That this Suppoſition of the *Atheiſt* is Groundleſs and Unphiloſophical, I will for the preſent take it for granted, what ſhall afterwards be proved, *viz.* That theſe are Properties of immaterial Subſtance; and as a Conſequence of that, that we

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are able to form ſome Notion of an Immaterial Subſtance *. And as for the Subſtance itſelf of an Immaterial Being, it would be in vain and to no Purpoſe to argue, that we knew nothing of it, or could form no Idea about it; becauſe the ſame Objection would equally affect Material or Corporeal Subſtance, of which we know as little as we do of the other.

BUT ſuppoſing it never ſo certain, That we could form no Idea of an Immaterial Being; this would not prove the Impoſſibility of its Exiſtence; unleſs it was as certain, That the Faculties of a limited Nature, ſuch as ours confeſſedly is, could reach to the utmoſt Extent of every Truth, and no Poſſibility of Being could eſcape the Searches of our Underſtanding. Whereas all the Knowledge we can pretend to have of the Exiſtence of Things *without us*, muſt be derived to us thro' ſome or other of the Senſes; for theſe

* Vide Serm. VI, VII, VIII, IX.

are the only Carriers of all the Intelligence that the Mind receives concerning External Exiſtences. And then which Way will the *Atheiſt* take to convince any Body, that our Five Senſes are all the poſſible Ways of receiving Information concerning the Nature and Operations of External Objects. If we ſhould conſult our Reaſon in this Matter, that would probably tell us, That this particular Number of Informers was rather calculated for our preſent State (in which we find ourſelves beſet on all Sides with Corporeal Objects, ſome of which are good for us, and others would hurt us) than to give us an exact Inſight into the Nature of Things. And that probably there may be many more Chanels of Knowledge than thoſe we are furniſhed with, and ſuch as would have given us farther Views into Things than we are capable of in our preſent Condition. And therefore we ſhould with juſt the ſame Reaſon and Juſtice pronounce againſt the Poſſibility of any Thing which is not the Object of one of our Five Senſes,

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as a Man that is born blind might declare againſt the Poſſibility of Light or Colours, becauſe he has no Idea of them; or as we all ſhould have done, had our whole Species come into the World with only Four of them, or without the Senſe of Seeing.

IT is certain we can form no Idea of an Eternal Duration already paſt; and yet the *Atheiſt*, as well as we, is forced to acknowledge the Exiſtence of Something from all Eternity. And his Want of an Idea of Eternity, is not ſufficient, even in his own Opinion, to excuſe him from believing it true. Let but Immaterial Subſtance have the ſame fair Play, and we are in no Pain from this Objection againſt a GOD. For the very ſame Reaſon which obliges the *Atheiſt* to admit Something Eternal, tho' he has no Idea of Eternity; will equally hold in the Caſe of Immaterial Subſtance, if there are, as I ſhall afterwards prove * certain Appearances in

* *Vide* Sermon VII, VIII, IX, X.

the World which cannot be accounted for by the mere Mechanical Laws of Matter in Motion. For then he will have the ſame Motive for taking in ſome Being that is not a Material one, as he has for that of an Actual Eternity. For he takes Refuge in this, that he may avoid the Abſurdity of Acknowledging, that any Thing can come into Being abſolutely from Nothing, or without any Cauſe of its Being; and if he cannot make it very probable, that certain Powers I lately mentioned, may ariſe purely from Matter; he muſt then either acknowledge thoſe Powers to have exiſted without any Cauſe or Reaſon of their Exiſtence, or elſe with us he muſt admit Immaterial Subſtance.

THE other Argument againſt Immaterial Subſtance, *viz.* That there is nothing ſubſtantial in the World but Matter; is a ſhameful begging of the Queſtion in Diſpute, and taking for granted, what they know we conſtantly deny. For how would the *Atheiſt* prove this? Why thus *Spinoſa* does

does it, he gives us a Definition of Subſtance, that " 'Tis Something In-" dependent of every other Thing, and " exiſting by a Neceſſity of Nature." From thence he inferrs, That ſince there can be but One Self-exiſtent or Independent BEING, and Extenſion or Matter is confeſſed to be a ſubſtantial Being, therefore there can be no other Subſtance in the World beſides Matter; and conſequently, no ſuch Thing as Immaterial Subſtance. But all this Proof amounts to no more than if he had only told us, there is Nothing but Matter, therefore no Immaterial Being. For he knows very well that we denied Matter to be the Self-exiſtent Being; and therefore that if his Definition of Subſtance was a good one, that we ſhould deny it belonged to Matter, or in this Senſe of the Word, that Matter itſelf could be a Subſtantial Being, or indeed any Thing except the One Self-exiſtent BEING: And then how will his Definition prove to us the impoſſibility of Immaterial Subſtance? Thus far then we can

go in Defence of a GOD, That his Immateriality cannot be proved to be impoſſible, or to imply a Contradiction.

2dly, ANOTHER Difficulty the *Atheiſt* is wont to raiſe againſt our Notion of a GOD, is, The Power that we aſcribe to Him of making Something from Nothing. Here the *Atheiſt* is wont to triumph, as if we had found out a Power that could not poſſibly have any other Exiſtence than in our own Imaginations: Here they perſuade themſelves, that they are ſupported by Authority as well as Reaſon. The *Atheiſt* does ſeldom take Refuge in Authority, but in this particular Caſe he condeſcends to part with his beloved Singularity, and is contented for once to be found in a Croud, and to take Shelter in Numbers. But he might as well have kept out of them for any Advantage they will be to his Cauſe. For he ſuppoſes the Meaning of this *Axiom*, *Nothing can be made out of Nothing*, to be deſigned by all thoſe who made uſe of it, not only againſt the Production

Production and Annihilation of any Species of Things; but alſo that there can be no other Productions but what are from pre-exiſtent Matter; that every Thing muſt have a Material as well as an Efficient Cauſe of its Being. But here his Numbers forſake him, and he is reduced to thoſe of his own Sect. For altho' it was generally believed before the Appearance of Chriſtianity, That Matter was eternal and unmade, yet we are ſure that all thoſe, at leaſt, who acknowledged our Souls to be incorporeal, did not derive them from pre-exiſtent Matter: For thus *Plato* ſays *, "That if the Soul be ancienter than "the Body, then muſt the Things of "the Soul alſo be ancienter than thoſe "of the Body; and therefore Cogita-"tion, and the ſeveral Species of it "muſt be in the Order of Nature, not "only before local Motion, but alſo "before the Longitude, Latitude and "Profundity of Bodies." From whence 'tis

* Plato de Legib. Lib. X. pag. 896.

'tis evident, *Plato* could not possibly suppose the first Production of Souls to be derived from pre-existent Matter: Which is directly contrary to the Account which the *Atheist* gives of Things: For he must say, That the Things of the Soul, *viz.* Thought, *&c.* are posterior in the Order of Nature to the Formation of Things, being an Effect of Matter properly moved. And therefore supposing the Antients to have been unanimous in Denying the Production of any Substances ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων; yet since they did not derive all Beings from Matter, they will do the *Atheist's* Cause little Service; for if the *Atheist* will not allow their Authority, when they suppose that there must be some active Substance not derivable from Matter; neither are we obliged to allow it, when they suppose the Essences of all Things to be eternal.

BUT the *Atheist* may say, that their Agreement in denying a Power of producing Substances, will be of great Service to him, because a just Pursuit of that Principle must necessarily end in the

the Denial of a GOD, as the advancing of two Independent Principles, is a ſetting up two Gods, which is the the ſame Thing with pulling down one.

AND therefore if they had ſeen the Impoſſibility of two Self-exiſtent Principles, they muſt have joyn'd with the *Atheiſt*, in deriving all Things from that which every Body's Senſes aſſure them to be a ſubſtantial Being, *viz.* Body or Matter.

To this we anſwer, That all the Sects of Philoſophy, excepting that of *Epicurus*, ſpeak ſo fully their Senſe as to the Neceſſity of ſome active Being diſtinct in its Original from Matter, in order to account for the Appearances of Things, that we may with much better Reaſon conclude, that if they had ſeen the Conſequence of their Doctrine, they would rather have allowed of a *Creative*, than have given up to the *Atheiſt* an *Active* Power diſtinct from Matter.

AS the *Stoick* is generally ſuppoſed to be the greateſt *Materialiſt* of all the Sects, next to that of *Epicurus*, he will be

be the fitteſt Perſon to be interrogated upon this Occaſion; and I think it cannot be difficult to ſhew, that if the *Stoick* argued conſiſtently, he muſt have been more eaſily perſuaded to admit a Power of Creating Matter, than to part with his Active Power or Principle; for ſo long as he ſuppoſed Matter or his *Materia prima* (which, according to him, was the Principle of all material Exiſtences) to be a lazy and inactive Being, it would be impoſſible for him to give any Account of this Frame of Things, without an active Power to work upon the *Inertia* of Matter, or rouze it out of its Stupidity *.

AND therefore 'tis reaſonable to believe, that had he been reduced to this *Dilemma*, of either admitting a Power of Creation, or rejecting an Active

* Dicunt, ut ſcis, Stoici noſtri duo eſſe in rerum Naturâ, ex quibus omnia fiant, Cauſam & materiam: Materia jacet iners, res ad omnia parata, ceſſatura, ſi nemo moveat. Cauſa autem, id eſt, Ratio, materiam format, & quocunque vult verſat, ex illâ varia opera producit. *Seneca* Epiſt. 65.

Active Principle, that he would have chosen the former, rather than have owned himself to be of a Sect of Philosophy that could give no Account concerning the Formation of Things. For it cannot be said, that the *Stoical* Active Principle might be a very volatile Matter, and what he called Matter, the grosser Part of it, to distinguish it from the former; because there is no other Difference between the finest and the grossest Matter, if Matter, as Matter, be inactive, than that the finest requires a less Force to put it into Motion: and then this Active Principle, instead of giving Motion to every Thing, must be moved itself by Something; and therefore could not be a Principle of Action, or account for the Formation of Things.

BUT however that be, if we consider the Reasons by which he and the rest of the Philosophers were determined in rejecting the Creative Power, they will appear to be so weak and inconclusive, that their Authority in this particular Point ought to have little Weight

Weight with us; they either argued from Natural Generations, or Artificial Productions. Becauſe we do not now ſee Nature producing any Subſtances, but only different Modes of Being, therefore the Author of Nature never could: Becauſe all Works of Art are only the Management of pre-exiſtent Matter, and fitting it for particular Uſes, therefore GOD, as well as every other Artiſt, muſt have a Subject prepared to his Hands to work upon. But this Way of Reaſoning will never prove what ought to be proved, *viz.* That it is impoſſible in the Nature of the Thing, that there ſhould be any ſuch Power. For this Power of making Something out of Nothing, or of creating a Subſtance, is no more than the bringing Something into Being, which before had no manner of Exiſtence; but this is not to affirm, That a Thing may be, and not be at the ſame Time; which is a Contradiction, and therefore the Object of no Power whatſoever; but only that Something, which once had no Being at all, may be

be brought into Being. If we, who work only upon pre-existent Matter, cannot conceive how this should be done; this can be no good Argument against the Possibility of its being done by an Infinite Power; for there will always be something in such an Object as the Infinite BEING, that will more than fill our finite Capacities.

AND *Spinosa* himself confesses as much, when he tells us, * "That he "cannot understand the Manner how "many Things are brought about by "his Self-existent BEING, such as the "Cohæsion of the Parts of Matter, "and the Connexion which particu-"lar Beings have with each other. And

* Seriem rerum singularium mutabilium impossibile foret humanæ imbecillitati assequi, cum propter earum omnem numerum superantem multitudinem, tum propter infinitas circumstantias, in unâ & eâdem re, quarum unaquæque potest esse causa ut res existat aut non existat. Tract. de Emend. Intellect. p. 388.

Cognoscere quomodo partes naturæ revera cohæreant, & quomodo unaquæque pars cum suo toto conveniat, id me ignorare dixi in antecedenti meâ Epistolâ, quia ad hoc cognoscendum requireretur totam naturam omnesque ejus partes cognoscere. p. 439.

"And yet he is fully perſuaded, that "there is a Chain and Connexion of "particular Beings; that there is ſuch "a Thing as the Cohæſion of the "Parts of the Body, and an Union of "all the Parts with the whole." And therefore, in Purſuance of the ſame Way of Reaſoning, Altho' we cannot tell how GOD could make all Things out of Nothing, our Ignorance will never prove the Thing to be impoſſible, no more than *Spinoſa*'s Ignorance of the Cauſe of Cohæſion in the Parts of Matter, will prove that there can be no ſuch Thing.

THE Neceſſity of admitting a Creative Power, will appear ſtill ſtronger, when we come to ſhew the Abſurdities which the *Materialiſt* for Want of ſuch a Power is reduced to. But

3*dly*, ANOTHER Impoſſibility the *Atheiſt* is wont to charge upon our Notion of a GOD, is on account of our aſcribing Goodneſs to Him, which they ſay, is plainly contradicted by the many Marks and Tokens of Natural and Moral Evil which appear in that Part

Part of his Workmanſhip which we are beſt acquainted with. Before the *Atheiſt* can prove that theſe could not poſſibly proceed from a Good BEING, it will be incumbent on him to ſhew, That 'tis inconſiſtent with the Nature of Goodneſs to make Beings with different Degrees of Perfection. If he cannot do that, then certainly every Degree of Imperfection makes an Abatement of the Happineſs of the Creature; and ſuch an Abatement conſtitutes what we call Natural or Phyſical Evil. Thus for Inſtance, 'Tis an Imperfection in us Men that we want a perfect Knowledge of our own Frame and Conſtitution; ſuch a Knowledge, I mean, as would enable us to find out (antecedently to the tedious Way of Trial and Experience) what would be good for us, and what would be prejudicial or hurtful to us. To ſupply the Want of this Knowledge, GOD has affix'd the Idea of Pain to our Natures, which is deſigned to give us Warning of any Thing that might hurt us. Pain is

acknowledged to be a real Evil, and yet if we were not admoniſhed by it to avoid ſuch Things as would be hurtful to us, what thro' Inadvertence and Ignorance of our own Frame, we ſhould never know when it was out of Order, nor endeavour to ſet it aright, till it was too late. If therefore it be not repugnant to the Idea of Goodneſs to create a Being with ſuch a limited Knowledge; neither could it be inconſiſtent with the ſame Goodneſs to make him capable of receiving painful Ideas, when ſuch a Conſtitution was fitted for the Uſe and Benefit of ſuch a Creature.

AND thus for Moral Evil, the *Atheiſt* can never ſhew its Exiſtence to be a Contradiction to the Idea of Goodneſs, till he can fully ſatisfy us, that there can be no ſuch thing as a Creature endued with a Power over its own Actions; becauſe if that is poſſible, which the *Atheiſt* cannot diſprove, ſuch a Creature may moſt certainly make an ill Uſe of that Power, and involve itſelf in Moral Evil.

BUT

BUT I ſhall decline ſaying any more upon this Head of Natural and Moral Evil, becauſe this Subject has been already Handled by the Learned Perſon who lately Preached theſe Lectures; to whom the Reader is referred for farther Satisfaction.

SERMON IV.

1 THESSALONIANS V. 21.

Prove all Things: hold fast that which is good.

HAVING in the preceding Discourse shewn that the *Atheist* cannot prove a Contradiction upon our Notion of a GOD; and yet sure if there was a *real* Contradiction in it, he might help others to a Sight of it as well as himself; I proceed to consider the Difficulties attending his Scheme, by which he will appear to be a very partial Enquirer after Truth, as he

might have ſeen much greater Difficulties in his Material Scheme, than thoſe which he makes Objections againſt the Religious one; that under the Colour of avoiding the three Difficulties of an Immaterial, Omnipotent, and Good GOD, he is forc'd to take Refuge in ſuch Explications of Things as are evidently falſe and impoſſible; and is therefore inexcuſable in making thoſe Difficulties a Pretence for rejecting Religion.

SPINOSA is the only Perſon among the modern *Atheiſts*, that has pretended to give us a regular Scheme of *Atheiſm*; and therefore I cannot act unfairly in making him the Repreſentative of their Party, and in proving the Weakneſs and Abſurdities of the Atheiſtick Scheme, by ſhewing the Faults of his: tho' I ſhall not ſo entirely confine myſelf to the Examination of his Scheme, as not to ſhew occaſionally, that every other Scheme that leaves out the Religious Notion of a GOD, will be liable to great Abſurdities. And if we examine the Hypotheſis which

Spinoſa

Spinoſa has ſubſtituted as a Remedy to the above-mentioned Difficulties, I am fully perſuaded his Remedy will appear to all indifferent Perſons to be much worſe than the Diſeaſe he complains of.

He ſuppoſes with us, "That Something muſt have exiſted from all "Eternity, without having any other "Cauſe of its Exiſtence than the abſo-"lute Neceſſity of its own Nature:" Thus far we are agreed. He further ſuppoſes, "That there is Nothing in "Nature, that is, no Subſtance or *real* "Being, beſides this One Neceſſarily "Exiſtent Being; and ſince the Ex-"iſtence of Material Subſtance is moſt "evident, that this muſt be the One "Self-exiſtent Being, and all the va-"riety of Beings in the World, no-"thing but different Modifications of "this One Material Subſtance. He ſup-"poſes this Subſtance to be Infinite "or Immenſe, and to have an infinite "Number of Attributes, two of which "he ſuppoſes to be Thought and Ex-"tenſion; he then affirms in Conſe-

" quence of this, That all Bodies " are Modifications of this One Sub- " ſtance, conſidered as *extended*; as all " Souls or Thinking Beings are the " Modifications of this One Subſtance " conſidered under the Notion of " *Thought*. So that GOD, the Neceſſari- " ly Exiſtent BEING, and endued with " infinite Perfections, is the Cauſe of " all Things that exiſt, tho' at the ſame " time He himſelf differs not really " from thoſe Things that exiſt; they " being all of them Conſubſtantial with " him, and not ſo much as perſonally " differing from Him. He is at the " ſame time Agent and Patient, Cauſe " and Effect, and every Thing He pro- " duces, is only practiſing upon *Him-* " *ſelf*; and generating a new Appear- " ance of *Himſelf*."

THIS is the extraordinary Scheme that *Spinoſa* has thought fit to erect, in order to get himſelf clear of the Three above-mentioned Difficulties. From this Account of his Syſtem 'tis evident, that tho' *Spinoſa* and we do differ as to the Subject of the Self-exiſtent Nature; yet,

yet, as to certain Characters or Properties of it, we are both agreed; ſuch as,

1ſt, THE Unity or Simplicity of the Self-exiſtent BEING. And 2dly, Its Immutability. For whatever Diverſity, whatever Changes there may ſeem to be in the Nature of Things, yet all this does ſeem to paſs with him for nothing; ſo long as 'tis but one and the ſame Numerical BEING appearing in different Dreſſes: As a Man ſuffers no real Change by aſſuming different Characters, or by perſonating any State or Condition of Life different from his own: Which he thinks ſufficient to ſecure both the Unity and Immutability of his Self-exiſtent BEING. Thus far then being agreed, we are to enquire, How far he has mended the Religious Scheme by rejecting Immaterial Subſtance; and whether his Material Scheme can poſſibly anſwer the abovementioned Characters.

THE inſuperable Difficulties which thinking Men found in reconciling theſe Attributes with material Extenſion, inclin'd

clin'd them to admit, altho' their Senſes could give them no Information concerning the Exiſtence of any ſuch BEING, that there might be in Nature ſome more perfect Manner of Exiſtence than the Material one; and this they called Immaterial Subſtance. *Spinoſa* himſelf was well aware of the Difficulties that would diſturb his Material Scheme, and therefore found it neceſſary to give us a new Notion of Matter, and different from what the World had hitherto ſuſpected of it. Matter had always been thought capable of Diviſion into numberleſs Parts; each of which Parts might exiſt ſeparately from the whole; and conſequently, if Matter was the Self-exiſtent Being, according to the common Notion the World had of it, there muſt have been as many Self-exiſtent Beings as there are Parts into which Matter is diviſible. But *Spinoſa* was ſenſible that the BEING which was Neceſſarily Exiſtent, could be but *One*; he therefore lays it down as the Foundation of his Undertaking, "That "there is no more than One Material "Subſtance

"Subſtance in the World; that what "every Body before him had call'd di-"ſtinct Subſtances, were to be no long-"er ſuch." And tho' the ſeveral Parts of Matter are every Day ſeen to be ſeparated from each other without loſing their Exiſtence, as when the Parts of Wood are divided from each other into Smoke and Aſhes; and tho' the ſeparate Exiſtence of Individuals, and of the ſeveral Concretions of Matter look never ſo much like diſtinct Subſtances; yet they ſhall all paſs with *Spinoſa* for nothing more than different Modes of one and the ſame Being.

BUT if we know any thing at all, we know this to be falſe and impoſſible: if we have any diſtinct Ideas, and if ſuch diſtinct Ideas will at all prove a real Diſtinction or Difference in Things exiſting without us, we are as certain as we can be of any Thing, that there muſt be more than one Material Subſtance; as many as there are or can be of ſeparate, material Exiſtences, and thoſe as many as the Diviſions which Matter is capable of receiving. And

therefore

therefore *Spinoſa* by ſubſtituting Matter in the Room of Immaterial Subſtance, has avoided a Difficulty, and taken up with an Impoſſibility. For let there be never ſo much Difficulty in conceiving Immaterial Subſtance, yet when we find ourſelves reduced to this *Dilemma*, of either admitting it for true, or elſe acknowledging Matter to be a Simple Being, the Choice which Side to take, cannot be long in making: For all that any one can ſay againſt Immaterial Subſtance, is only this; That his Senſes give him no Account of any ſuch Exiſtences; but as for Matter or the Material World, he ſees nothing plainer than that this is a Compound Being, each of whoſe Parts may exiſt ſeparately; and therefore can never be made conſiſtent with that Unity and Simplicity which are neceſſary Conſequences of that *Oneneſs* of Subſtance which *Spinoſa* aſcribes to the Neceſſarily Exiſting BEING. The only Subterfuge *Spinoſa* has, and a mere Subterfuge it is, is this; That he takes it for granted, there is no ſuch Thing as a *Vacuum*;

and

and therefore that there can be no real Separation of one Part of Matter from another.

IN the firſt place, This is taking for granted, and Building his whole Scheme upon what Sir *Iſaac Newton*, a much better Philoſopher than himſelf, has ſince his Time given the World ſtrong Reaſons for believing to be falſe, *viz. That there are no Spaces void of Matter.* But ſuppoſing there is no ſuch Thing as a *Vacuum*; yet thoſe who maintain'd the Infinity of Matter, or that all Space was filled with Matter, did acknowledge, that the Parts of Matter were really diviſible and ſeparable from each other; and conſequently did not think void Spaces neceſſary in making a Separation of one particular Part of Matter from another, however neceſſary they might be to make a total Separation from all Matter in general: For who will not ſay, that two Perſons are as really ſeparated from one another, tho' the Space or Diſtance that ſeparates them ſhould be filled with other Perſons, as if it were taken up by any Thing

Thing else? and therefore one Part of Matter may be really divided from' another, altho' the Space between those two Parts of Matter should be filled up by other Matter.

INDEED, *Spinosa* himself seems to mistrust the Strength of this Argument, and therefore thinks it best to provide himself a Retreat in case he were beaten out of it, by saying, That he does not know whether he attributes any thing to GOD, that is unworthy of him, if he should grant that He was divisible *. And all the Reason he gives why Divisibility should be an Imperfection in GOD, is, "Because if He is "divisible, He is divided by *Himself*, "and not by any External Cause." But this Answer leaves the Difficulty in all its Strength: For let the Divisibility be caused by what it will, still the Difficulty remains, how a partable and separable

* Se nescire cur divinâ Naturâ indigna esset, si dicatur Divisibilis. *in the latter End of the* Scholion *to* Prop. 15. Part 1.

ſeparable Nature, can be a Simple or Uncompounded BEING. Till the *Materialiſt* can ſatisfy us in that Point, we muſt beg Leave to affirm, That he is no fair Examiner; that he could not be determined by the greater Evidence, when he left Religion to free himſelf from the Belief of Immaterial Subſtance, becauſe at the ſame time he ſaw himſelf under a Neceſſity of ſwallowing an Article of Belief of much harder Digeſtion; I mean, that Diviſibility is irreconcileable with Unity.

2*dly*, ANOTHER remarkable Difficulty the *Atheiſt* brings upon himſelf, is, To make a ſufficient Proviſion for the Immutability of his Self-exiſtent BEING, while he makes Matter to be the Subject of it. We are fully perſuaded that we know the Difference between a Being that always continues the ſame, and a Being that is perpetually changing the Manner of its Exiſtence; that a Being who is what it is by a Neceſſity of Nature, cannot be ſubject to Change or Corruption: we are alſo well aſſured that Material Beings are ſo far from being

being without Variation or *Shadow of Turning*, that they are ſubject to all manner of Alterations, that they are ſucceſſively putting on new Modes of Being, acquiring ſome Forms that they had not before, and loſing others that they had.

How much ſoever our modern *Atheiſt* may think fit to laugh at the *Epicureans*, yet I think, in this Reſpect, they have taken better Care of their Gods than he has done. The *Epicureans* ſaw that their Material Gods could never be permanent Beings, if they were in the Way of their Atoms; that their Frame would be in continual Danger of being diſordered, if not deſtroyed by their continual Incurſions: and therefore they wiſely removed them out of their numberleſs Worlds, where the Atoms were continually joſtling each other, and placed them in Security in their Intramundan Spaces: But our modern *Atheiſt* has taken no ſuch Care of his God, for he has left him in all the Hurry and Confuſion of Things, continually altering and changing his State and Condition,

Condition, ſometimes for the better, ſometimes for the worſe; he is the Subject of all the Generations, and all the Corruptions that are ſeen in the World. For, as what others would call particular Beings or Subſtances, are with *Spinoſa* only Modes of the ſame One Subſtance GOD; ſo it muſt be GOD that is the Subject of all the Changes; and yet *Cotta* in *Tully de Natura Deorum*, ſpeaks of it as an undoubted *Axiom* in *Philoſophy*, *Si ortus eſt Deorum, interitus ſit neceſſe eſt.* p. 56.

MUTABILITY has ſo plain a Mark of Imperfection upon it, and is ſo inconſiſtent with neceſſary Exiſtence, that it gives *Spinoſa* no ſmall Trouble to clear his Neceſſary Being from any ſuch Imputation; and the only Way he could think of, was this: That tho' the Manner of Being was always changing, yet the Subſtance or Subject of thoſe Changes always continued the ſame. But this Plea will never excuſe his Self-exiſtent Being from Variableneſs and Change, whenever we appeal to any of the Ancients who have made uſe of

these Words: For they all maintained, as much as *Spinosa*, the Immutability of the Substance of Body; they supposed that the Substance of Matter was never created or annihilated, but always continued the same; and yet believed it a BEING that was ἀλλοίωτος & τρεπτός, because of its so often altering the Manner of its Existence.

THE *Proteus* of the Ancients, tho' the Emblem of the greatest Inconstancy, would be as immutable a God, with all the different Forms he threw himself into, as *Spinosa*'s Self-existent Being. For 'twas always the self-same Being, tho' sometimes in one Shape, sometimes in another. And therefore to deny the Mutability of any Being merely because the Substance remains the same, is to give a new Signification to the Word, and different from what was ever given before. For in every Mutable Being 'twas always understood, that the Substance remained what it was, only the Mode of its Existence was altered; otherwise there would be no Difference between the

Change and the Annihilation of a Being; and yet the Poets as well as Philoſophers, the fabulous *Metamorphoſes* of *Ovid*, as well as the real Changes and Corruptions, as explained by the Philoſophers, have always ſuppoſed a Difference between theſe two Ideas. And therefore *Spinoſa*'s Argument will only prove the Immortality, not the Immutability of his Self-exiſtent Being.

'Tis plain from *Plutarch*, That he thought a Being might be immortal, and yet an imperfect and mutable Being: For thus he expreſſes himſelf in his Treatiſe againſt the *Stoicks*, where he is ridiculing the Stoical Notion of *Jupiter*, into whom the *Stoicks* ſuppoſed all other Beings, Gods as well as Men, to be transformed at the Conflagration; "*Chryſippus*, ſays he, and *Cleanthes*, "when they had filled the whole "World with what they called Gods, "they took no Care of ſecuring any "of them from Corruption but *Jupiter* "only, in whom all the reſt of the "Gods were loſt. And then he makes this Remark, "That his deſtroying of

" them was no better a Proof of his " own Immutability than it was of " theirs. For, ſays he, it is no more " an Argument of Weakneſs and Mu- " tability in the Gods, that they are " changed and *corrupted* into *Jupiter*, " than it is in *Jupiter* into whom they " are changed *."

BESIDES, this Argument of the *Spinoliſts* cannot be a good one, becauſe it would prove too much: for it would prove not only that the Self-exiſtent BEING was not a Mutable BEING, but alſo that there could be no ſuch Thing as a Mutable Being in the World. For if the Self-exiſtent BEING could be an Immutable one amidſt all the

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* Plutarch. Περὶ τῶν κοινῶν ἐννοιῶν πρὸς τοὺς Στωϊκούς. —— Sect. 1000.

Χρύσιππος καὶ Κλεάνθης ἐμπεπληκότες — τῷ λόγῳ θεῶν τὸν οὐρανὸν — οὐδένα τῶν τοσούτων ἄφθαρτον οὐδὲ ἀΐδιον ἀπολελοίπασι, πλὴν μόνου τοῦ Διὸς εἰς ὃν πάντας καταναλίσκουσι τοὺς ἄλλους, ὥστε καὶ τούτῳ τὸ φθειρᾶν προσεῖναι τοῦ φθείρεσθαι μὴ ἐπιεικέστερον. ἀσθενείᾳ γὰρ τινὶ καὶ τὸ μεταβάλλον εἰς ἕτερον φθείρεται, καὶ τὸ τοῖς ἄλλοις εἰς ἑαυτὸ — φθειρομένοις τρεφόμενον σώζεται.

the Changes He went thro', only becauſe his Subſtance was not deſtroyed but remained the ſame; then what ſhould hinder Man from being an Immutable Being, altho' he ſhould change his Opinions, Inclinations and Purpoſes every Day, or, if you will, every Hour of the Day? for amidſt all theſe Changes, he is ſtill the ſame Perſon or perſonal Being. And therefore by the Reaſoning of the *Spinoliſts*, he too would be a moſt ſteady Being, tho' his Thoughts and Purpoſes were unſteady enough.

THESE Difficulties, or rather Impoſſibilities, muſt affect every Scheme that the *Atheiſt* can raiſe upon the Foot of a Material God. And now I will leave it with every Thoughtful Perſon, whether the *Atheiſt* could be moved by any rational Conviction, when he took Refuge in the Material Hypotheſis, to avoid the Difficulty of conceiving an Immaterial Exiſtence; and whether he has not acted the ſame fooliſh Part, which

Cotta charged upon *Epicurus* in another Caſe *. But,

2*dly*, I AM now to conſider how he has mended the Matter by rejecting a Power of making Something from Nothing. As he allows no ſuch Power, he is under a Neceſſity of deriving all the Powers of Nature from the Subſtance of Matter, as from an *Emanative* Cauſe, producing them by acting upon itſelf; and thus Thought, Senſe, and Life, as well as Material Extenſion, muſt all be drawn out of the Bowels of this ſimple Subſtance of Matter.

AS there are evidently Thinking, as well as Unthinking Beings in the World; the Difficulty is, how to derive both of them from one ſingle Principle. *Spinoſa* and we are agreed, That there is but One Principle of all Things: we account for it, by ſuppoſing an Omnipotent, Subſtantial Intelligence to have given Being to Matter, not as an Emanative

* Graviorem plagam recipiebat, ut leviorem repelleret, *p.* 58. de Nat. Deorum. *Davies*'s Edit.

native Cauſe, by producing it out of its own Subſtance; for we do not ſee how material Extenſion ſhould flow from the Subſtance of a Thoughtful Being, any more than how Thought ſhould ariſe from Matter; but that GOD gave a Being to Matter from *Nothing*, or when it had no manner of Exiſtence previouſly to the Exerciſe of this Power of his.

THE *Atheiſt*, that he may avoid aſcribing this Power of producing Subſtances, or of making Something from Nothing, which he thinks to be the Object of no Power whatever, is forced to have recourſe to Material Subſtance as the only Source from whence muſt ariſe both Thought and Extenſion, all the Variety of Corporeal Beings, all their Powers and Qualities, and alſo all the Powers of Mind, ſuch as thoſe of Perception and Intelligence. A hard Task this is for him to perform; and yet hard as it is, he muſt go thro' with it, if he will not with us admit a Power of Creation.

WE agree to what the Author of the *Characteriſticks* has ſaid concerning the Production of either of theſe Subſtances, (to wit, Extended and Thinking) out of the other, when he ſays *, "That the poor Dregs of ſorry Mat-"ter, can no more be made out of "the ſimple, pure Subſtance of imma-"terial Thought, than the high Spi-"rits of Thought or Reaſon can be "extracted from the groſs Subſtance "of heavy Matter." We joyn, I ſay, with him in this Reaſoning, and do therefore aſſert the Neceſſity of having Recourſe to a Creative Power; for ſince neither Material Subſtance can flow from Immaterial, nor Immaterial Thinking Subſtance from Material in the Way of *Emanation*; there muſt either be two Independent Principles from whence we may draw out theſe two different Kinds of Being; or elſe one of them muſt neceſſarily be produced from Nothing. If the *Atheiſt* will affirm, That Thought and

* Vol. II. p. 296, 297.

and Extenſion may ariſe from the ſame Subſtance; the Abſurdities he will be reduced to, are theſe; he muſt ſay, That *Senſe* and *Inſenſibility* are the Attributes of the ſame Simple Subſtance of GOD; and yet he nor no Man alive can tell how ſuch incompatible Attributes could be identified, ſo as to conſtitute one Simple Subſtance; that is, how the ſame ſimple Subſtance could be both ſenſible and inſenſible, thoughtful and thoughtleſs.

TO avoid this Abſurdity, he muſt then ſay, That there is no real Difference between Thought and Extenſion; he muſt fall in with that abſurd Notion of Mr. *Hobbs*, "That all Matter "is furniſhed with actual Senſation and "Thought; altho' only Matter Orga-"nized and in Life, can make Evidence "of its Perceptions." And *Spinoſa* ſeems to be under a Neceſſity of acknowledging this; becauſe he makes Thought and Extenſion to be Two Attributes of his One Subſtance, and ſays, "That "there is no real Difference between "the Attributes and the Subſtance."

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For if there be no real Difference between the Attributes and the Subſtance, there can be none between the Attributes themſelves, to wit, between Thought and Extenſion, according to that known Rule, That thoſe Things which agree in a third, muſt agree among themſelves.

THUS we ſee *Spinoſa* in avoiding the Difficulty of conceiving Something made out of Nothing, reduced to the Neceſſity of making no real Difference between Thought and material Extenſion, tho' every Body elſe ſees a manifeſt Difference between them. Whatever Difficulty then there may be in conceiving it poſſible that Something ſhould be made from Nothing; yet I hope there is a great deal of Difference between our *not conceiving* the *Poſſibility* of a Thing, and the *conceiving* it *impoſſible* to be: That Thought and Extenſion ſhould be really the ſame Thing, we ſee, if we ſee any thing, to be impoſſible; becauſe our Ideas of 'em are evidently the Ideas of different Things *, and

* Vide Serm. VIII.

and we must despair of ever knowing that one Thing is not another, if such Marks of Distinction in our Ideas will not prove a Difference in the Things themselves.

2*dly*, THERE is another Absurdity which *Spinosa* is led into by rejecting the Creative Power, which is this: He must make his Self-existent Being the Subject of all the contradictory Inclinations and Passions which are met with in Mankind; for if there be no Creative Power, there will be no other Way in accounting for the Existence of Things, but by deriving them from the Substance of the Self-existent BEING: But all such Derivations can be nothing but so many different Modes, as himself confesses, of the Divine Substance; and consequently, the Souls of Men, all their Thoughts and Passions, will be only different Modes of the Divine BEING. And therefore it will be GOD, and not the Man (for he is only a Mode of the Divine BEING) that thinks, affirms or denies, loves or hates, so often as Man seems to do either

either. For it is an undiſputed *Axiom* in *Philoſophy*, That whenever we affirm of any Thing, That it is an Agent or a Patient, we mean, that the Subſtance, and not the Accidents, does or ſuffers this or that; as when we ſay, Iron is hard, or Wax ſoft; we mean not to ſay, that the Accident of Hardneſs is hard, or of Softneſs is ſoft, for this would be ridiculous; but that the Subſtance or Eſſence which conſtitutes theſe Bodies is hard or ſoft: ſo when we ſay that a Man thinks of any Thing, affirms or denies, loves or hates any Thing; we do not mean, that the Thoughts themſelves (which are only Accidents or Modes of the Soul) but the Man himſelf or his Soul thinks, affirms or denies, loves or hates. From thence it muſt follow, that the Souls of Men, being according to *Spinoſa*'s Scheme, Modifications of the Divine Subſtance, we muſt not (if we would ſpeak properly) ſay; that the Man affirms or denies, loves or hates; but that GOD loves or hates, affirms or denies, as often as Men do ſo: And as one Man at the

the ſame Time, and in the ſame Reſpects, affirms what another denies, and loves what another hates. According to this Account of Things, GOD muſt at the ſame Time, and in the ſame Reſpect affirm, and not affirm or deny, love, and not love or hate, which are palpable Contradictions; and if we know any thing at all, cannot poſſibly belong to any Being. Yet theſe, or as great Abſurdities will ſtick faſt to all the Deniers of Creative Power.

FOR they muſt either affirm, with *Spinoſa*, That all the ſeveral Beings in the World are only Modes of the Neceſſarily-exiſtent BEING, which muſt end in the Abſurdity I have now mentioned, of making all the contradictory Volitions and Paſſions of Men to be the Affections of one and the ſame Being: Or if they affirm theſe Modes of *Spinoſa* to be real and ſubſtantial Beings; they muſt admit what is equally abſurd, an infinite Number of Neceſſarily-exiſtent Beings, as many as there are real Beings in the World: Or elſe they muſt with us, allow, how difficult ſoever it may

may be to conceive, that there muſt be ſomewhere or other a Power of making Subſtances or real Beings, which is the ſame thing with what we call the Creative Power. For nothing can be plainer, than that all particular Beings (ſuppoſing them to be real or ſubſtantial Beings) muſt exiſt by a Neceſſity of Nature, if there be no ſuch Thing in the World as a Power of making real Exiſtences.

SPINOSA was well aware of this Conſequence, and therefore as he was neither willing to admit a Power of Creation, nor a Plurality of Neceſſarily-exiſtent Beings, he could ſee no other Way of extricating himſelf out of this Difficulty, but by advancing this new Notion, "That what the World had "before him called real Beings, was no-"thing more than different Modes of "Being." And tho' Mr. *Bayle* ſeems to think the *Chineſe* Notion, which makes all particular Souls to be ſo many Self-exiſtent Beings, or *Democritus* and *Epicurus*'s infinite Number of Self-exiſtent Atoms, to be a more rational

tional Account of Things, than that which makes all particular Beings to be only Modes of Being; yet thus far I think ſufficiently clear, That the *Atheiſt* acts a moſt fooliſh Part when he takes Refuge in either of theſe, to excuſe himſelf from admitting a Power of Creation.

FOR as to a Plurality of Self-exiſtent Beings, nothing can be more abſurd than to make all the Diverſity of Beings, with different Degrees of Power, to be all Neceſſarily-exiſtent. The Reaſon which induced the *Chineſe* to ſuppoſe a great Number of Self-exiſtent Souls with *different* Powers, was, That they might the better account for their animating *different and unequal* Portions of Matter; and the Reaſon why the *Epicureans* ſuppoſed their Self-exiſtent Atoms to be of different Figures, was, That they might give a more probable Account of the *different* Combinations of Material Beings. But if this Inequality of Souls, and the Different Figures of Atoms, was really neceſſary in accounting for the Diverſity of Beings in the World, it will be neceſ-

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ſary to look farther, and enquire for the Cauſe of this Difference in the *Chineſe* and *Epicurean* Principles: For if the Inequality in the ſeveral Portions of Matter, was a good Reaſon for ſuppoſing an Inequality in the Self-exiſtent Principles, what Reaſon can they give why we ſhould not as well look out for the Cauſe of the Inequality of their Principles, as well as they provide a Cauſe of the different and unequal Combinations of Bodies? They could, I ſay, have no more Reaſon for ſuppoſing the Difference of their Principles to have ariſen from the Neceſſity of their Natures, than that the different Combinations of Matter, ſhould have ariſen from ſuch a Neceſſity; which latter they do not ſuppoſe. And therefore, if they would argue conſiſtently with themſelves, they muſt acknowledge ſome external Cauſe of the Difference that is ſuppoſed to be in their Principles; and this Cauſe muſt be ſome One *Simple* BEING, not many Beings; becauſe all Diverſity of Being does plainly ſuppoſe a Reaſon of

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its being what it is, extrinsical to the Nature of the Being, to wit, that it must have some external Cause, that makes it to be what it is, or different from any Thing else.

AND thus I have shewn that the *Atheist* does not act like a fair Examiner, when he rejects a GOD with a Power of Creation; because he either takes up with a Number of Self-existent Beings of unequal Forces, or else, with *Spinosa*, he makes the Self-existent BEING to be every Thing, in the strictest and propereſt Sense of the Words; which are such Absurdities, that we may without Breach of Charity, deny such Persons to be impartial Searchers after Truth.

SERMON V.

1 THESSALONIANS V. 21.

Prove all Things: hold fast that which is good.

I HAVE already ſhewn that the *Atheiſt* cannot be a fair Examiner, when he quits Religion for the avoiding ſome Difficulties in the Religious Scheme; becauſe he muſt ſwallow much greater, if he will account for the Appearances of Things, and abide by his Material one. As to two of the Difficulties which he is wont to complain of, *viz.* The Imma-

teriality of GOD, and his Power of Creation, or of making Something from Nothing, we have already ſeen, that if he will not admit theſe, he muſt admit ſome Things that are much harder of Belief, and that therefore he cannot be juſtified by any fair and candid Reaſoner in rejecting Religion, for the Sake of theſe Difficulties.

I AM now to conſider one other Difficulty, which he makes in Excuſe for not believing a GOD, which is, That it would oblige him to believe that Evil may be reconciled with the ſuppoſal of a Good BEING; and am to ſhew, That all the Ways he can poſſibly take to account for the real State of Good and Evil upon the Foot of *Atheiſm*, are impoſſible to be true; and therefore that he is an unfair Examiner in rejecting Religion for the Sake of this Difficulty. I will begin with that Account *Spinoſa* is able to give of this *Phænomenon*, conſiſtently with his Syſtem of the World, which is built upon a ſingle Principle, from whence he is to draw both Good and Evil.

IF there was in the World nothing but Natural and Moral Good, or nothing but Natural and Moral Evil, there would be no Difficulty in deriving either of them from one ſingle Principle; but as there is an evident Mixture of both in the World, *Spinoſa* judg'd it to be impoſſible that ſuch a Mixture ſhould ariſe from a good Principle, and therefore erects a new Syſtem with a Material God at the Head of it, that ſhould be neither Good nor Evil, but in its own Nature indifferent to both: Such a Being then acting neceſſarily according to its Nature, which Nature is ſuppoſed to be perfectly indifferent as to Good and Evil, and acting by an infinite Force or Power, muſt produce all the Poſſibilities of Being. For *Spinoſa* ſays *, *Ex Neceſſitate Divinæ Naturæ infinita infinitis modis, hoc eſt, omnia quæ ſub intellectum infinitum cadere poſſunt, ſequi debent.* And therefore, ſince Errors and Crimes, Grief and Pain, are as real Modifications of Being, as Truth and

* Prop. XVI.

Virtue, Pleaſure and Happineſs; conſequently one as well as the other muſt have a Place in the Univerſe. For this Principle being in its own Nature indifferent to either what we call Good or Evil, and producing all that is poſſible to be produced, it muſt of courſe produce Evil as well as Good.

WE will now ſee whether 'twas worth *Spinoſa*'s while to quit Religion in order to get rid of that difficult Queſtion, If a Good GOD, πόθεν τὸ κακόν. I would grant *Spinoſa*, that his Infinite BEING ſhould produce all the Poſſibilities of Being; but then I can never grant, that Contradictions are Poſſibilities of Being. And yet ſurely it looks as much like a Contradiction as can be, to draw out of the ſame Simple, Uncompounded Subſtance both Wiſdom and Folly, Virtue and Vice, Happineſs and Miſery; and yet if this Account could be true, theſe muſt all flow from the Eſſence of the Self-exiſtent BEING.

HOMER has ſhewn much better Senſe, when he accounted for the Goods and

and Evils of this Life by placing two Tuns near the Throne of *Jupiter*, one filled with good Things, the other with Evils, and that Goods and Evils came from Heaven, as *Jupiter* poured out of either of them; if he poured out of both at the ſame Time, then there was upon Earth an Appearance of both Good and Evil, or a Mixture of both. He ſaw that if he had made both Happineſs and Miſery to be drawn out of the ſame Veſſel, that it would have had too much of the Air of Incredible, even for a Poem; that it would have been as bad as if he ſhould have pretended to fetch both *ſalt Water and freſh* from *the ſame Spring* or Fountain, which was in St. *James*'s Time a proverbial Saying by which they uſed to expreſs an Impoſſibility. Had *Spinoſa* lived in thoſe Days, and broached this Doctrine, his God might have been in Danger of becoming a proverbial Expreſſion for any Thing that was thought impoſſible. For to ſuppoſe a Simple Being to be neither Good nor Bad, but a Mixture of both, is ſuppoſing what is al-

together unintelligible. The *Spinoſiſt* muſt allow a *real* Difference between Phyſical Good and Phyſical Evil, Pleaſure and Pain, Happineſs and Miſery: And yet if his Account of Things were true, theſe muſt be ſo like one another, and ſo much of the ſame Nature, as to come indifferently from the ſame Uncompounded Subſtance.

BUT this is not all, here is not only a Difficulty of giving Birth to both Good and Evil from ſuch a ſingle Principle, but alſo when that is done, of freeing ſuch a Principle from the Contradiction of being at the ſame Time happy and miſerable, in Joy and in Grief, as often as Men or any other Beings are in theſe Circumſtances, which is always the Caſe of ſome or other of them. *Tully* * ridicules a Notion of *Pythagoras*, which made the Souls of Men to be Parts of the Divine BEING; becauſe GOD muſt in ſuch Caſe be often miſerable; but this was not to be reconcil'd with his ſuppoſed Happineſs.

* Tull. De Natura Deorum.

Happineſs: *Nam Pythagoras qui cenſuit Deum animum eſſe per Naturam rerum omnem intentum & commeantem, ex quo noſtri animi carperentur, non vidit diſtractione humanorum animorum diſcerpi & dilacerari Deum: & cum miſeri eſſent animi, quod pleriſque contingeret, tum Dei partem eſſe miſeram.* We ſee that it was then thought a good Argument againſt *Pythagoras*'s Opinion, That if it were true, the DEITY muſt be miſerable, which could not be, becauſe GOD was a Happy BEING, and they little thought that 'twas poſſible to be both happy and miſerable at the ſame Time; and therefore *Pythagoras*'s Notion was juſtly rejected, and ſo muſt *Spinoſa*'s too for the ſame Reaſon; for if *Pythagoras* made the Souls of Men to be Parts of the Divine BEING, *Spinoſa* makes them to be Modes of the ſame BEING, or the ſame Nature of GOD, differing only in the Manner of its Exiſtence; and therefore the Divine BEING muſt be at leaſt equally affected in the one as in the other Caſe.

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THE Religious Man ſtands clear of any ſuch Abſurdities; as he ſuppoſes theſe particular Exiſtences which are the Subjects of Evil, to be made not out of the Divine Subſtance, but from *Nothing*, and to be created with different Degrees of Perfection, and conſequently, that the Evils they are obnoxious to, whether Phyſical or Moral, do not proceed from Him, but are, as I before obſerved, merely the Effects of their imperfect Natures. And we do not think that the *Atheiſt* can prove it inconſiſtent with Goodneſs to make limited or imperfect Natures. Thus far we are ſure we can talk Senſe. Whereas *Spinoſa* having no Creatures nor limited Natures to take Refuge in, muſt neceſſarily ſuppoſe all the Evils and Imperfections of the World to be the Attributes of his Infinite BEING: And therefore cannot avoid the Abſurdities I have now charged upon him.

THERE is alſo one other Abſurdity chargeable upon *Spinoſa*'s Syſtem, *viz.* That all the fooliſh and wicked Thoughts of Men, as well as thoſe that

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are good and rational, muſt be the Thoughts of his Self-exiſtent BEING; but ſo long as we ſee a real Difference between good Senſe and Fooliſhneſs, Virtue and Vice, we can never ſee how ſuch incompatible Properties can flow from the ſame Principle. For this would be to make a moſt Simple Being to be not only a Compound Being, which is Contradiction enough; but alſo compounded of ſuch inconſiſtent Ingredients as could never be united together in the ſame Being, but would battle each other till one of them had ſubdued and deſtroyed the other.

BUT then, it may be ſaid, Why may not this be true, as well as what the Chriſtian Religion ſuppoſes to be true, *viz.* That the ſame Perſon may be the Subject of both human and divine Attributes? For human Wiſdom, or the Wiſdom which human Nature, for Inſtance, is capable of, when compared with divine Wiſdom, is no better than Folly: And if this be true, then the Subject of both Natures muſt be at the ſame Time divinely and humanly wiſe, that

that is, wiſe, and not wiſe; but this can no more be conceived than the other; and if theſe Things can be ſuppoſed by the Religious Man to exiſt in GOD, why not by the *Spinoſiſt* in *his* Self-exiſtent Being. Some Chriſtians to avoid this Difficulty of uniting GOD and Man in the Perſon of our SAVIOUR, either ſuppoſed one of the Natures to be ſwallowed up, loſt or confounded in the other, *viz.* the Man in GOD; or elſe, that after the Union there ſtill continued two diſtinct Subjects of the two different Natures; but there is no Need of either of theſe Solutions to clear the Union of GOD with Man from the Objections I have raiſed againſt *Spinoſa*'s Self-exiſtent Being. For when GOD took upon him human Nature, that human Nature was perfectly ſubmitted to the Divine, and conſtantly followed its Guidance, and the Actions of the Perſon were always the laſt Determinations, not of the Paſſions and Appetites of the Man, but of the Divine *Logos*. No contrary Volitions, no Conflict between GOD and Man, but the Word directed,

and

and the Man followed. And tho' our SAVIOUR, as a Man, is ſaid to have encreaſed in Wiſdom as well as Stature; yet it is enough for my preſent Purpoſe, that there was no Claſhing between the Wiſdom of the Divine and Human Nature: If the Wiſdom of the latter was leſs extenſive, yet it was without any Mixture of Folly: Whereas I objected againſt *Spinoſa*'s Syſtem, becauſe it introduced a Nature which was a perfect Scene of Contention and Inconſiſtency, as it was evident from the many *rational* and *fooliſh* Thoughts of Men; which if we know what Contradictions are, muſt be ſuch, whenever they are both made to be at the ſame Time the Thoughts of one and the ſame Being. And yet (as I have already ſhewn) his Self-exiſtent Being, ſo long as he ſuppoſes him the only Subſtance or real BEING in the World, and all other Beings only the ſame Being in different Shapes and Dreſſes, according to the Diverſity and Variety that we ſee in Nature, muſt be chargeable

able with all the fooliſh as well as rational Thoughts of Men *.

HAVING now ſhewn that *Spinoſa*'s Hypotheſis is ſo far from giving a better Account of that Mixture of Good and Evil which appears in the World, than the Religious Scheme, that it will by no means introduce any ſuch Mixture into the World; and therefore that every *Spinoſiſt* is Culpable when he rejects Religion for the Difficulty of reconciling Good and Evil with a Good GOD:

I COME now to ſhew, That no other Atheiſtick Scheme ought to be taken up by any fair and impartial Examiner; becauſe every other Atheiſtick Scheme, different from that of *Spinoſa*, will ſuppoſe more than One Neceſſarily-exiſtent Principle; but a Plurality of Self-exiſtent Beings cannot poſſibly be true. And therefore how well ſoever a Plurality of Principles would account for this particular Difficulty, yet it

* Vide Serm IV,

it ought not to be admitted for a Solution of it; becauſe every good Syſtem ought to be built upon clear and evident Principles of Reaſon, as well as to be qualified for ſolving Appearances of Things: But every Scheme that ſuppoſes a Plurality of Independent, Neceſſarily-exiſtent Beings, is ſo far from being ſupported by clear, evident Principles of Reaſon, that 'tis directly repugnant to the cleareſt Ideas we have of the Order of Things. All the real Perfections that Men have ever had any Notion of, they have been wont to give to the Self-exiſtent BEING; they were ſure that Something muſt be boundleſs in its Exiſtence, both with regard to Time and Place; and as the Exiſtence of that Something was excluded from no Place nor Time, that its Operation could not be hindered any *where* nor any *when*. As theſe Powers and Privileges, I ſay, were always thought to have a real Exiſtence in Nature, they were as conſtantly aſcribed to the Self-exiſtent BEING; for the Excellency of ſuch a Nature muſt be, according

ing

ing to our Conceptions, if any Thing be ſo, entitled to all poſſible Perfections; but then it muſt be very hard to conceive two ſuch Beings with all theſe Powers and Privileges; as for Inſtance, We ſhall be hard put to it to find Room for more than One of ſuch a Kind of Beings, as would by Itſelf fill up and exiſt in every Part of the infinite Space, as it muſt of Neceſſity, ſince 'tis ſuppoſed to be Infinite or Immenſe.

'TILL the *Atheiſt* can tell us how to provide a Reception for a ſecond Infinite, when all is already taken up by the other; we muſt beg Leave to affirm, that he has a much greater Difficulty upon his Hands, than the Religious Man has, when he is called upon to account for Good and Evil upon the Foot of a Good GOD. For as the *Atheiſt*'s Self-exiſtent Beings, are ſuppoſed to be Material, they cannot be both in the ſame Place; and therefore a Second cannot be at all, becauſe the Firſt is ſuppoſed to be Infinite, and to have already filled all the infinite Space.

BUT

BUT farther, The Idea of Power ſticks cloſe to our Idea of the Self-exiſtent BEING, and yet our Ideas will not allow of halfing or dividing the Power between Two; becauſe this would be to admit Two Powers that could controul one another, and diſturb each other in their Operations; which furniſhes out a very faint Idea of Power, too much limited and reſtrained to be given to a Neceſſarily-exiſtent and Infinite BEING. For in this Caſe, neither of the Self-exiſtent Beings would be able to produce any one Thing without the Interpoſition of the other. And therefore every Being in the World would be the Effect of their oppoſing one another, and ſo receive not its Nature from either, but from both.

AS the Appearances of Things are no where pure or unmix'd Good, nor pure or unmixt Evil, ſome Perſons have diſcovered a great Fondneſs for Two Contrary and Independent Principles, hoping that ſuch a Syſtem would perfectly well account for the Mixture of Good and Evil, as whatever ſhould be

produced from the Struggle and Conflict of two contrary Powers, muſt of Courſe partake of the Nature of both. But however fond they may be of this Way of ſolving the Difficulty, they may do well to conſider, whether the aſcribing to the Neceſſarily-exiſtent BEING ſuch a limited Power as evidently contradicts our cleareſt Ideas, be not a better Proof of the Falſhood of this *Hypotheſis*, than any Arguments they can bring againſt the Being of a GOD from their *Phænomenon* of Good and Evil. the firſt we are ſure cannot be the Truth, for Reaſons I have already given; the laſt may poſſibly be true, altho' we cannot clear up every Difficulty that may offer itſelf to us, when we are endeavouring to reconcile Good and Evil with a Good GOD. But,

2*dly*, I WILL now ſhew, that ſuppoſing the Poſſibility of the Exiſtence of Two or more Contrary, Independent Principles, that yet they would not, any more than *Spinoſa*'s Syſtem, account for the Appearances of Good and Evil in the World.

I

I HAVE, as I before obſerved, avoided entring into a particular Detail of the Difficulties that are met with in reconciling Evil with a Good BEING, becauſe the Learned Dr. *John Clark* has lately *ex profeſſo* examined them; however, I hope, even in this Way of Handling the Matter, to ſhew, That the *Atheiſt* is an Unreaſonable Perſon, if he has left Religion for the Sake of this Difficulty. As I have already ſhewn, That the Scheme of many Self-exiſtent Principles, the Refuge of ſome *Atheiſts* from this particular Difficulty, is inconſiſtent with our plaineſt Ideas: If I can alſo ſhew, That ſhould we give him any of his Schemes on the Foot of Plurality, yet he would not be able to account for the Difficulties; we ſhall *leave him* without any Shew of an Excuſe, if he pretends to have *left us*, that he might ſtand clear of Difficulties.

SUPPOSING then for once, the Poſſibility of the Exiſtence of Two or more Independent Principles of contrary Natures; theſe Principles muſt either have an equal or unequal Force. If they were

unequal Powers, then the ſuperior Power acting neceſſarily and to the utmoſt Stretch of its Power, muſt, in an eternal Duration, have deſtroyed all the Effects of the weaker Power; And then if the ſuperior Force were Good, there could be *now* no ſuch Thing as Evil; or if Evil, no ſuch Thing as Good; neither of which will anſwer to the true Appearance of Things. The *Atheiſt* cannot defend himſelf by the Ancients, who ſuppoſed unequal, contrary Powers to have always had an Exiſtence, without deſtroying one another: For altho' the ancient *Theology* of the *Pagans*, as we find by the Poets and other *Mythologiſts*, conſiſted of many contrary Principles endued with unequal Powers; tho' the good Beings, ſuch as *Jupiter*, &c. were ſuppoſed by them to be ſuperior in Power to their *Vejoves*: yet they might eaſily believe the eternal Co-exiſtence of ſuch unequal Powers, or that the leſſer were not deſtroyed by the Greater; becauſe they ſuppoſed *Jupiter* and the reſt of the Good Principles to be *Free Agents* that acted

acted with Views and for Ends, and might therefore believe that the Good, tho' a ſuperior Principle, had permitted the Action of the inferior Evil Being, in a Way of Puniſhment to ſuch as had broken the Laws of thoſe Beings, who were the Principles of Goodneſs. But as to the Atheiſtick Principles which act neceſſarily, or becauſe they can't help it; and conſequently, act to the utmoſt of their Power, the eternal Subſiſtence of unequal contrary Forces muſt be impoſſible, for the Reaſon already given; and therefore they cannot account for the State of Good and Evil in the World. But,

2dly, IF we take two contrary Principles of *equal* Force to account for Good and Evil, then as they act neceſſarily, and therefore to the utmoſt of their Powers, their continual Oppoſition to each other muſt either produce nothing but Confuſion; that is, the evil Principle muſt deſtroy as faſt as the Good Principle produces any Thing, becauſe the Evil Principle is ſuppoſed to have as much Power, and to be

under as great a Neceſſity of uſing that Power as the Good One: Or elſe an equal Mixture of Good and Evil muſt run thro' all Things, as the neceſſary Reſult of the Equality of their mutual Oppoſition. For there is no third Way of conceiving the Effect of the Agency of two neceſſary, equal, and contrary Powers. But if neither of theſe be agreeable to the truth of Things, then the *Atheiſt* is not to be juſtified in rejecting Religion for the Difficulty of ſolving the Appearances of Good and Evil, becauſe every pretended Solution upon the Foot of *Atheiſm*, will then appear to be falſe.

1*ſt*, THE Appearance of Good and Evil cannot be accounted for by Two contrary, equal Principles; becauſe if they acted Neceſſarily, the Effect of their mutual Action would be nothing but Diſorder and Confuſion, as Two equal, contrary Powers muſt of Neceſſity deſtroy the Operations of each other. Monſieur *Bayle*, as fond as he ſhews himſelf upon all Occaſions of the *Hypotheſis* which pretends to account for Good and Evil by Two contrary Principles;

Principles; was yet ſenſible, that Two ſuch contrary Natures, unleſs they acted with ſomething like Freedom, could never account for Good and Evil; and therefore when he is making an Apology for *Zoroaſter*, he repreſents him as juſtifying his Two Principles in this Manner: "That it was with his Two Principles for ſome Time, as it was with "Mr. *Hobbs*'s Men in a State of Na-"ture, and before the Eſtabliſhment "of Societies; that every Man was an "Enemy to every other Man, and did "each other all the Miſchief they "could; and thus, ſays he, it was with "the Two Principles at firſt, till they, "as well as Mr. *Hobbs*'s Men, weary "of ſuch a confuſed State of Things, "in which one Principle was conti-"nually overturning what the other "was building up, came at laſt to an "Accommodation, and joyned amica-"bly together for the future, in the "ſeveral Productions of Nature *." Mr.

* Hiſtor. Dict. in voce Zoroaſter.

Mr. *Bayle* enters into ſo many Particulars in his Vindication of this Doctrine of *Zoroaſter*, that we may believe he look'd upon it as the moſt rational Solution of the preſent Difficulty. But from hence we may obſerve, That Two contrary Principles, ſo long as they acted Neceſſarily and to the utmoſt of their Power, could produce nothing but a State of the utmoſt Confuſion and Diſorder; becauſe this is ſuppoſed and allowed to have been the State of Things previouſly to the Agreement of the Two Principles: and then without ſuch Agreement, every Thing muſt have been ſtill in Confuſion, and different from what we ſee at preſent; and therefore were it poſſible that this Account of Things could be the Truth, yet it would do the *Atheiſt* no Service, unleſs he would allow the Exiſtence of Beings that act upon Choice, which he always ſteadily denies, and while he does ſo, can have no Right to any Advantage from this *Hypotheſis*.

IF it be ſaid, That ſuch an Accommodation is conſiſtent with Neceſſity, and that a good Principle is neceſſarily determined

determined to ſuch an Accommodation, as a Mixture of Good and Evil is better than no Good at all; the Anſwer is, That ſuch a Determination muſt be the Effect of Choice and of a Freedom of acting, and not of any abſolute Neceſſity of the Nature of the Being; becauſe the Operations of a Being that acts from a Neceſſity of Nature, will always be as invariable as its Nature; and therefore if they both acted from a Neceſſity of their Natures, the Effect of their acting muſt be always the ſame, and no Room for Variation, which this Accommodation ſuppoſes. 'Tis true, the *Atheiſt* allows *Men* the ſame Power of tranſacting with each other for their mutual Benefit, and yet denies them a Liberty of Action: but I am perſuaded they would not perſiſt in denying ſuch mutual Agreements between Men, to be an Argument of Choice and Freedom, if they could ſee any Poſſibility of reconciling Liberty with their Material Scheme. For they cannot but ſee a Difference between Moral and Phyſical Motives, between being

being moved to act by a Reason, and being forced into Action by an external Impulse; and that this Difference exists in the Nature of Things, and therefore they would never have made them to be the same, if they could have fetched them both from Matter, and yet supposed any Difference between them. But,

To proceed, If the *Atheist* finding he can make no Advantage of this imaginary Accommodation between the Two Principles for a Solution of the present Difficulty, should rather take up with another, which the same Mr. *Bayle* proposes in the Title *Paulicians*, *viz.* "That the Good Principle opposes with "all its Might and without ceasing the "Sin and Misery of the Creature; "but that the Evil Principle acting on "its Side with all its Strength in Opposition to it, there results from this "continual Shock of the Two Principles, that Mixture of Good and Evil "which we see every where, as the "Action and Reaction of two contrary "Qualities produces a third Quality par-

"taking

"taking of the Nature of both:" If, I ſay, he has any Hopes from this Way of ſolving the Difficulty, we will ſhew, that this cannot be the true one, Becauſe ſuppoſing ſuch a Conflict between Two contrary Principles, if they did not, as I have already obſerved, turn all into Confuſion, then the Conſequence would be, that there muſt be an equal Mixture of Good and Evil running thro' all Things; whereas if this were the Caſe, there muſt be an invariable and uniform Appearance of Good and Evil; the Mixture of Good and Evil muſt be the ſame in every Part of Space, as well as every Part of Time, becauſe it proceeds from Two contrary Cauſes acting neceſſarily and to the utmoſt of their Powers; and therefore no Reaſon can be given why their Action and Reaction, or the Reſult of them, ſhould not be the ſame in every Part of the infinite Space, their Powers being ſuppoſed to be equal. But if the ſame Quantity of Good and Evil had been blended together from Eternity, and uniformly diffuſed thro' the Infinite

Extenſion,

Extenſion, there could have been no ſuch Thing as human Conduct or Wiſdom, no Poſſibility of chuſing the leſs Evils or Inconveniencies to avoid greater ones; becauſe the Inconveniences muſt be equal which Way ſoever we act, if the Evil be equal or as much in every Part of Infinite Space as the Good is.

AWAY then with all the Maxims of Wiſdom which Men have hitherto pretended to diſtinguiſh themſelves by, if the ſame Degree of Evil muſt be expected, act as wiſely as we will. But if the real State of Things proves, that there is more evil in one Way of acting than in another, this ſhews that the Mixture of Good and Evil did not proceed from Two contrary Principles acting neceſſarily; but from One Free and Intelligent BEING, that has judiciouſly annex'd different Degrees of Evil or Inconvenience to different Ways of acting, in order to make a Trial of our good Senſe in chuſing the leaſt Inconveniences. In this Way of accounting for Good and Evil, we can ſuppoſe them

mixed

mixed together, and yet leave Room for the Exerciſe of good Senſe: Becauſe a BEING that acts not from any Neceſſity of Nature, but with every Degree of Freedom which is conſiſtent with acting wiſely, may ſo order the Conſtitution of Things, as to leave it in the Power of ſome Beings, if not entirely to ſeparate the Evil from the Good, yet, at leaſt, when there are different Degrees of Evil, to take the leſſer: Whereas if Good and Evil proceeded from two different and contrary Cauſes acting neceſſarily with all their Force, it could never be in the Power of any particular Beings, ſuch as Men, to alter ſo far the Original Conſtitution of Things as to take Good without taking an equal Portion of Evil; becauſe it cannot be ſuppoſed, that what has been joyned together by two infinite Powers, can poſſibly be ſeparated by Man. But ſince all the World allows a Difference between wiſe and fooliſh Conduct, the Appearance of Good and Evil ſuch as it really is, cannot poſſibly be reconciled

reconciled by an *Hypotheſis* of Two contrary Principles acting neceſſarily.

AGAIN, as Wiſdom and Folly are not reconcileable with Two contrary Principles acting neceſſarily; ſo neither will the unequal Allotment of Good and Evil to ſome Sorts of Men, receive a Solution from Two contrary Principles; for Beings that act neceſſarily, it muſt be granted, cannot be Reſpecters of Perſons, but muſt diſperſe their Favours or Reſentments promiſcuouſly to all that come in the Way of them, and not ſingle out particular Perſons for that Purpoſe. This is ſo plain a Deduction from the *Atheiſtick* Scheme, that *Lucretius* could not deny it; and therefore when he comes to that Part of Nature which relates to the Diſpenſation of Good and Evil, he plainly gives up the Cauſe of *Atheiſm*, in acknowledging that this was not to be accounted for by any Laws of mere Matter and Motion; for ſpeaking of the Misfortunes of great Men, of which the Hiſtories of all Times had furniſhed great Numbers of Inſtances, he drops his Atoms, and

and has Recourſe to I know not what hidden Power that took a Delight in making a Jeſt of all human Grandeur. *Vſque adeo res humanas vis abdita quædam Obterit, & pulchros faſces ſævaſque ſecures, proculcare & ludibrio ſibi habere videtur* *. We may by the Way obſerve, That *Lucretius* does here the ſame Thing for which he and other *Atheiſts* have thought fit to laugh at the Religious Man; becauſe his Material Cauſes were found by him not ſufficient to anſwer this *Phænomenon* of Nature, he is contented to take Refuge in an unknown Cauſe, a Θεὸς ἀπὸ μηχανῆς, and yet when we have recourſe to a God, they will allow it no better a Name in us than a Cloak for our Ignorance. But if the *Atheiſt* would declare as fairly with regard to ſeveral other *Phænomena* as *Lucretius* has done in this particular one, he would find as much Want of a GOD for extricating him out of other Difficulties, as *Lucretius* did in this concerning good and Evil.

If

* Lucret. Lib. 5.

IF the Religious Man meets with ſome Difficulties in reconciling the Misfortunes of great and good Men with a Good BEING, yet nothing has been thought clearer than that Something beſides the neceſſary Laws of Matter and Motion muſt have had a Hand in human Affairs. There was always ſo much ſeeming Caprice, ſuch Inconſtancy, and Changes ſo ſudden, and ſo unaccountable in the Hiſtory of great Men, particularly of ſuch as had been great and good Men, that it has been always thought neceſſary to have Recourſe to ſome Agent that governs all Events with perfect Freedom, and not to Matter in Motion, whoſe Laws were too ſteady and too regular to account for them. For 'twas eaſily ſeen that the Workings of Neceſſary Agents muſt be as unchangeable as their Natures. And therefore a more regular Courſe of human Affairs than the preſent, muſt have ariſen from the Action of a Being or Beings that brought Things about from a Neceſſity of Nature.

THUS

THUS we ſee the *Atheiſt* is never the nearer towards giving himſelf Satisfaction concerning Good and Evil, when he exchanges *Religion* for *Atheiſm*; but if he deals fairly with himſelf, he will only find this Difference, That whereas he ſtumbled at ſome Appearances of Evil which he could not reconcile with Goodneſs or the Exiſtence of a Good Principle, he muſt now ſee every Solution he can give of this *Phænomenon* upon the Foot of *Atheiſm*, plainly impoſſible to be the Truth.

SERMON VI.

ACTS XVII. 28.

For in Him we live, and move, and have our Being.

THESE Words are Part of a Speech St. *Paul* made upon *Mars*-Hill at *Athens*, in Juſtification of himſelf againſt the Charge of endeavouring to introduce a new Religion into that City; he tells them, That he had Preached no ſtrange Gods, but the very ſame GOD whom they themſelves worſhipped, under the Title of

the UNKNOWN GOD, tho' they were entirely ignorant of his Nature, as was plain by their erecting Temples to Him for his Habitation and Reſidence. Whereas himſelf had erected this ſtately Frame of the Univerſe, and therefore could never be in Want of a Room or Place to dwell in; neither could He want the Aſſiſtance of Men for making Him Altars and Images, for that He had given Life and Breath to thoſe very Men by whoſe Skill and Workmanſhip they pretended to honour Him. We find by the 18th Verſe, that the *Epicureans* made a Part of our Apoſtle's Congregation, for they went along with him from the Market-place, where they had been Diſputing, to the *Areopagus*. Theſe Men had wilfully miſtaken the Nature of GOD, and impiouſly ſtripp'd the DEITY of all the Privileges that had been univerſally allowed to belong to it; for the God of *Epicurus* had no Hand in the making the World, he neither moved the Matter of the World, nor directed its Motions, he was neither concerned in the

Inanimate

Inaminate nor Animate Part of it, and muſt be therefore ſhut out of all. For as to the Motion of Matter, from whence all its Variety ariſes, that was ſuppoſed by them to have been Eternal; and as for Life, that was nothing more than the particular Organiſation or Structure of the Parts, ſuch as is ſeen in Animals; which Organiſation too was entirely owing to Chance or Fortune, without the leaſt Interpoſition of their Gods. And as to the Nature of their Gods, we find by *Democritus* (from whom *Epicurus* took a great Part of his *Philoſophy*) that they were beholden to Matter for their Exiſtence; for he ſuppoſes them to be nothing but the Images of Objects, which according to his Way of Thinking, were continually flying off from all Corporeal Objects; as appears by *Tully* *. Had this been the real Truth of the Caſe, a Worſhip,

* Democritus qui tum imagines earumque Circuitus in Deorum Numero refert. Cicer. de Natura Deorum. Lib. 1. p. 28.

ſuch as that at *Athens* by Images, had been worthy enough of ſuch imaginary Beings, or rather more than they deſerved: But St. *Paul* tells them, That this was to miſtake entirely the Nature of GOD; for that He was the ſole Cauſe of all Things, and the ſole Giver of all our Powers of Action; for that 'twas in Him we all of us both lived, and moved, and had our Beings.

HAVING already conſidered ſome of the moſt material Objections which the *Infidel* is wont to urge againſt the Being of a GOD, and ſhewn that they cannot be a good Reaſon for denying Him, becauſe the Appearance of Things will neceſſarily require the Exiſtence of ſuch Powers and Properties as we aſcribe to Him, and which the *Atheiſt* pretends to find Fault with; I am now to repreſent ſome of the Arguments on which the Religious Man grounds his Belief of a GOD, drawn from the moſt conſiderable *Phænomena* in Nature, ſuch as Motion, Thought, and the Order of Things, which *Plato* calls the τὸ δ' ἐν καλῶς,

I will begin with that of Motion, and ſhew, That there is no poſſible Way of accounting for its Exiſtence, unleſs we will admit a GOD, or which is the ſame Thing to the *Atheiſt*, a Being diſtinct from Matter, and yet acting upon it.

THERE are but three poſſible Ways of accounting for Motion, either by ſuppoſing that there has been an infinite Succeſſion of Impulſes communicated from one Body to another from Eternity, without any active Principle either *in* Matter or *without* it; or that there is an Active Principle in Matter, that it is Self-active, and Motion eſſential to it, or elſe that there is ſome Being diſtinct from Matter, that is the Cauſe of its Motion. I will ſhew, that neither of the two firſt Ways of accounting for Motion, can poſſibly be the Truth; and therefore that the Cauſe of Motion, muſt be ſome Being diſtinct from Matter, the ſame BEING, which our Apoſtle made the Subject of his Diſcourſe to the *Athenians*, the GOD that made Heaven and Earth; the

ſole Giver of Life and Animal Motion, for that 'tis in Him we live, and have a Power of moving ourſelves. And,

1*ſt*, AN infinite Succeſſion of Impulſes without an Active or Moving Principle, will never give Birth to Motion, becauſe this would be to bring an Effect upon the Stage without the Help of a Cauſe. And yet abſurd as this is, *Spinoſa* was able to give no better an Account of Motion, or at leaſt thought this to be better than to ſuppoſe with ſome, That Motion was a neceſſary Attribute of Matter. And tho' all the World agrees, That in a finite Time 'tis abſurd to ſuppoſe an Effect without a Cauſe, which muſt be the Caſe, if Motion was not an eſſential Attribute of Matter; yet *Spinoſa* would never undertake to ſhew how an infinite Time would make any Senſe of it; and therefore always avoided giving a direct Anſwer, when he was preſs'd by his Friends to explain how Matter could ever come into Motion, if Motion was neither eſſential to Matter, nor proceeded from any external Cauſe. This laſt

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he could never own without giving up the Cauſe of *Atheiſm*, and therefore would never ſpeak plainly to this Point, as appears by the Sixty-third and following Epiſtles in his Poſthumous Works. This Behaviour of *Spinoſa*'s, makes it reaſonable to believe, that he himſelf would have given up his Account of Motion, if he could have ſaved his Scheme and his Reputation. And as *Toland* too has thought fit to reject it as indefenſible, I ſhall take no farther Notice of it, but proceed to the other *Atheiſtick* Account of Motion, which *Toland* thinks will be ſufficient, without troubling the Supreme BEING, *viz.* That Motion is eſſential to *all* Matter, and Action as much an Attribute of Matter, as Extenſion or Solidity; and conſequently, every Atom of Matter is neceſſarily Self-moving, or active from the Neceſſity of its own Nature.

THE World has had ſo ſtrong an Opinion of the natural Inactivity of Matter, that *Spinoſa* had not Courage enough to oppoſe it; but *Toland* finding

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ing *Atheiſm* was not tenable, if Matter was really Inactive, was reſolved to try whether he could not defend its Activity, as the only Refuge left for the ſinking Cauſe of *Atheiſm*. The Arguments he makes uſe of to prove the Activity of Matter, are theſe:

1*ſt*, "BECAUSE, he ſays, Motion, "as well as Extenſion and Solidity, is "included in our Idea of Matter; that "whenever we ſeparate Motion from "Matter in our Idea of it, 'tis only a "partial Conſideration of it, or an ab"ſtracted Notion of the Mind; and "therefore no more a Proof that Mat"ter can exiſt without Motion, than "that Mathematical Lines, Surfaces "and Points, have any Exiſtence in "Nature, becauſe they are in the "Heads of *Mathematicians*.

2*dly*, ANOTHER Reaſon he urges for the Activity of Matter, is, "Be"cauſe in Fact all Matter is in Mo"tion.

A THIRD Reaſon is this: "That "tho' there ſhould be ſome Objecti"ons againſt it, that much greater "ones

" ones would lie againſt an External " Mover of Matter."

IN anſwer to theſe Arguments of his I will ſhew,

1*ſt*, THAT our Idea of Matter, when we leave Motion out of it, is no abſtracted Notion of the Mind, but a compleat and adequate Idea of it.

2*dly*, THAT tho' all Parts of Matter were in Motion, it would not follow that Motion was an eſſential Attribute of Matter.

3*dly*, THAT the Activity of Matter is inconſiſtent with ſome Appearances in Nature.

4*thly*, THAT the Objections againſt GOD's being the Author of Motion, are not ſuch as ſhould diſcourage any rational or unbyaſs'd Perſon from acknowledging, That 'tis in GOD we live, and have our Animal Being.

1*ſt*, I AM to ſhew, That our Idea of Matter without Motion, is not a partial Conſideration of Matter, but a compleat Idea of it.

THE Reaſon which has always determined the World to look out for a Cauſe of

of Motion extrinsical to Matter, was this: Tho' they could easily conceive it capable of being moved and divided; yet the conceiving it to be undivided, undiversified, and unmoved, was a more simple Notion of Matter, than the conceiving it divided and moved. This being first in Order of Nature, and an adequate Conception of it too, they thought it necessary to enquire and give themselves an Account how it came out of this State, and by what Causes Motion, from whence this Diversity in Matter arose, could come into the World? *Descartes*, altho' he allowed the Infinity of Matter as well as *Toland*, was yet sensible that even this would not alter the Nature of Matter, nor the Idea that every Body had of its Inactivity, and therefore could see no other Way of altering its primitive Idea, and reconciling it with the Motion of Matter, but by introducing another Infinite Being, *viz.* a GOD that had sufficient Power to rouse Matter out of that sleepy, inactive State in which its Original Idea had

had repreſented it. And *Toland* would have found himſelf under the ſame Neceſſity of admitting a GOD for the Mover of Matter, if he had not endeavoured to impoſe upon his Reader by confounding Diviſibility and Mobility, with actual Diviſion and an active or moving Power, as we ſhall ſee preſently. For he acknowledges, that the true Conception of Matter is this: That it is every-where the ſame, and only diverſified by Motion; ſo as by his own Confeſſion, the conceiving Matter in Motion, is a departing from that Unity of Subſtance, that Sameneſs of Nature in which our Ideas repreſent it to us. For all Diverſifications of Matter muſt of Neceſſity be ſo many Removes from the natural Unity and Identity of Matter, according to his Conception of it.

ARISTOTLE, who was confeſſedly the beſt Reaſoner among the Ancients, and not thought to be at all prejudiced in Favour of Religion, is yet very clear in this Point: in his firſt Book of the *Metaphyſicks*, *cap.* 3. he condemned thoſe

thoſe who ſtop'd ſhort at the material Cauſe of Generations and Corruptions, without looking after the Efficient Cauſe. " For, ſays he, altho' all Cor-
" ruptions and Generations, are vari-
" ouſly produced from Beings more
" or leſs compounded, yet 'tis neceſ-
" ſary to enquire, How this happens,
" and what is the Cauſe? For the
" Subject of all theſe Changes cannot
" poſſibly change itſelf, *viz.* The Wood
" and the Braſs cannot be the Cauſes
" that one of them is turned into a
" Bed, the other into a Statue; but
" Something elſe muſt be the Cauſe
" of theſe Changes. But to enquire
" after this, is to enquire after a Prin-
" ciple of Motion, or ſome Being that
" has a Power of beginning Motion,
" and communicating it to Matter *."
For he could ſee nothing in the Idea of Matter, that would qualify it for acting upon itſelf. Mr. *Bayle* in *voce Leucippus*, confeſſes, " That our Idea of
" Matter

* Vid. Ariſtot. Metaphyſic. Lib. 1. cap. 3.

"Matter is compleat when it repre-
"ſents nothing to us but Extenſion
"and Solidity, and that Motion is not
"included in it, but is a perfect exo-
"tick, a foreign Idea, that has no
"more relation to Matter, than
"Thought or Underſtanding." The Evidence againſt the Activity of Matter from its Idea, is ſo clear and ſtrong, that one would hardly have expected that this Idea ſhould have been preſs'd into a contrary Service, and made to ſpeak in behalf of the Activity of Matter. And yet Mr. *Toland* has attempted to prove Matter an active Being from its Idea.

As 1*ſt*, "FROM the Diviſibility of
"Matter, which always makes a Part
"of our Idea of Matter. And,

2*dly*, "BECAUSE our Idea of Mat-
"ter always contains ſome Quality or
"other, which neceſſarily ſuppoſes Mo-
"tion."

1*ſt*, FROM the Diviſibility of Matter, his Argument from hence is founded upon this; becauſe, as he ſuppoſes, we cannot conceive Diviſibility without Motion;

Motion; therefore we cannot conceive Matter which is always conceived as diviſible, without conceiving Motion as inſeparable from Matter. But this is plainly to make Mobility or the Capacity of receiving Motion, and Motion itſelf, or the *Vis motrix*, to be one and the ſame Ideas. For altho', *indeed*, we cannot conceive Matter to be actually divided, without adding Motion to our Idea of Matter; yet nothing more than a Capacity of receiving Motion is neceſſary to the making up our Idea of Diviſibility: But this laſt has a plain and evident Diſtinction in our Conceptions of Things from the former. For we can conceive a Thing to be diviſible, tho' it never ſhould be actually divided; and when we conceive Matter as diviſible, we at the ſame Time as well ſuppoſe it capable of continuing in an undivided State, as of changing it into a divided one. And therefore Motion is not neceſſarily included in our Idea of Diviſibility. And conſequently to ſay, That Diviſibility makes a Part of our Idea of Matter, would be no

Proof

Proof that Motion too muſt belong to our Idea of it.

BUT *Toland* goes further, and would prove, That Motion muſt neceſſarily be included in the Diviſibility of Matter; becauſe whatever is diviſible, muſt have within itſelf a Power of dividing itſelf; for thus he ſpeaks in his *Letter* concerning Motion *; "If, "ſays he, there was no *Internal* Ener-"gy, Matter would be incapable of "Alteration or Diviſion." But this can never be proved by him, unleſs he takes it for granted, that there is nothing in Nature beſides Matter; which would be to beg the Queſtion in Diſpute between us and the *Atheiſt*. For 'tis plain if any Thing beſides Matter had an Exiſtence, he might have conceived Matter to be diviſible without thinking of the internal Energy of Matter, becauſe Matter would be as truly diviſible, altho' we ſuppos'd it divided by ſomething elſe, as if we ſuppos'd it divided by itſelf, and the Idea of

* Page 194.

Diviſibility would be exactly the ſame in either Caſe. As to what he ſays, "That Motion is contained in our Idea "of Matter: Becauſe

2*dly*, "We can never form an Idea "of Matter devoid of all Qualities; "and all Qualities are an Effect of "Motion; conſequently Motion is not "to be ſeparated from our Idea of "Matter:" If by Idea, he means an Image or what may be an Object of our Senſes, 'tis agreed, that in this Senſe we can form no Idea of Matter diveſted of all Qualities; but this is to ſay nothing more than this, That we can't form an Image of a Thing which has no Image, or is no Object of our Senſes; but ſtill the Idea of ſolid Extenſion remains a diſtinct Idea from that of Motion, and therefore from all the Qualities that are a Conſequence of Motion; which ſhews that there is nothing in the Nature of the Thing that ſhould have hinder'd Matter from exiſting without Motion. And *Toland* himſelf acknowledges, "That "Motion is not included in the Idea

"of

" of Extenſion, nor any ways dedu-
" cible from it *." And therefore if we can have any Idea of Solidity, a ſolid extended Subſtance may be conceived to exiſt without Motion, or without any Qualities that ſhall affect our Senſes. Whereas there is no conceiving Matter to exiſt without Solidity and Extenſion, which ſhews *them* to be eſſential to Matter, and at the ſame time ſhews Motion to be not eſſential. And therefore he has plainly beg'd the Queſtion in Diſpute, in adding to the Idea of Matter a new Attribute, without any Proof that 'tis one.

He was ſenſible that the univerſal Belief of a *Chaos*, was an ugly Argument againſt him, and therefore takes ſome Pains in ridiculing the ſeveral Methods the Ancients took of bringing Matter out of that Confuſion, in which all Things were ſuppoſed to be while the *Chaos* laſted. But how ridi-

* See his Letter concerning Motion.

culous ſoever *their* Schemes might be, yet this is evident, that they could and did conceive Matter to have an Exiſtence altho' unmoved, and of courſe without any of thoſe Qualities that reſult from the Movement of Matter. *Ovid* in deſcribing the Chaotick State, tells us, " That there was no Kind " of Diverſity, but the ſame Face of " Things thro' the infinite Extenſion.*" That the whole was *rudis indigeſtaque moles, nec quicquam niſi pondus iners.* By which the Poet intended to expreſs the lazy and ſtupid State in which Matter lay during the *Chaos*, and till the Chaotick Matter began to be ſtirr'd. Mr. *Bayle* was as much out of Humour with the Account that *Ovid* had given of the ancient Opinion concerning a *Chaos*, as *Toland*, and therefore unreaſonably falls out with the Deſcription he has given us of it. That he may

* Ante mare & terras, & quod tegit omnia Cœ-
[lum,
Unus erat toto Naturæ vultus in orbe,
Quem dixere Chaos. *Ovid. Metamor.* L. 1.

may make his Account inconſiſtent with itſelf, *Ovid* is brought in repreſenting all the Variety in Nature as if it had an actual Exiſtence, before there was any ſuch Thing as Motion; when he ſays, ſpeaking of the Chaotick State, *Frigida pugnabant calidis, humentia ſiccis, mollia cum duris, &c.* and yet he had juſt before told us, that the Whole was an homogeneous Subſtance, *Unus erat Naturæ vultus*; whereas what *Ovid* ſays is very conſiſtent. He ſuppoſes the *Chaos* to be an homogeneous Subſtance, which, upon its being moved, was diverſified into Bodies of very different Natures, and not that any ſuch Diverſity had any other than a poſſible Exiſtence, till it was moved. And if Mr. *Bayle* had not been prejudiced againſt a *Chaos*, it ought to have paſs'd with him for a fine Piece of Imagery, when the Poet repreſents the Change that was made by Motion, that Earth, Air, Fire and Water, which had been hitherto blended together, were then ſeparated from each other. For the beſt Philoſophers are agreed, That all

Matter is really the ſame, and that all the Diverſity that appears in it, is owing to Motion. And therefore a Poet might well repreſent the ſimple and uniform Face of Matter, as containing within itſelf all theſe Diverſities, even before it was moved, becauſe it was capable of receiving them; without ſuppoſing them to have had an actual Exiſtence till the *Chaos* was put into Motion: which is enough to clear the Poet from the Inconſiſtency which Mr. *Bayle* would charge upon him, and at the ſame time to ſatisfy us, that the Ancients had a Conception of Matter as an uniform Being before it was moved. And conſequently, that *Toland*'s Conceiving Faculty was very defective, if he could not conceive Matter without Motion. But,

2dly, I AM to ſhew the Weakneſs of another Argument he brings for the Activity of Matter, *viz.* "That "in Fact all Matter is in Motion." And ſuppoſing it true, it would not follow that Motion was an eſſential Attribute of Matter. For if Motion

tion is not, as we have already ſhewn, included in our Idea of Matter, but we can as well conceive it at Reſt as in Motion; altho' there ſhould be no Bodies perfectly at Reſt, it would not yet follow that Motion is eſſential to Matter; but on the contrary, for this very Reaſon, (*viz.* That Motion is not contained in the Idea of Matter) we ought to look ſomewhere elſe than in Matter for a Cauſe of its Motion; and as 'tis proved to be foreign to our Idea, to look abroad for a Powerful Cauſe, ſuch as GOD, that had impreſs'd Motion upon Matter. But *Toland* lays Streſs upon this Argument, and ſays *, "Seeing "every Part of Matter is always in "Motion, you ſhould conclude that "Motion is eſſential to the Whole, for "the ſame Reaſon that you think Ex-"tenſion to be ſo; becauſe every Part "is extended." But the Caſe ſure is very different between Motion and Extenſion, becauſe Extenſion is confeſſedly included in our Idea of Matter, where-

* Page 204.

as Motion is not ſo. Beſides, if *Toland* reaſons juſtly, the Univerſality of Motion can be no Proof of its being eſſential to Matter, becauſe he allows the Centripetal Force to be univerſal, and belonging to all Bodies; for he deſcribes it thus: "'Tis that by which "all the Bodies of the Earth are drawn "or tend towards its Centre, as all "others to the proper Centres of their "Motions. *" And yet he does not allow that particular Determination, which we call Gravity, to be eſſential to Matter; and therefore Motion may belong to every Part of Matter, and not be eſſential to it; it may be univerſal, and yet proceed from an external Cauſe that has moved the Whole. But,

3dly, THAT Motion cannot be eſſential to Matter, may be made plain from theſe Three Reaſons.

1ſt, BECAUSE there could be no ſuch Things in the World as Bodies or any Concretions of Matter; which would render the Face of Things quite different

* Page 205.

different from what it appears at preſent.

2*dly*, BECAUSE there would be no Variation as to the Quantity of Motion, if all Matter was Self-active; and yet we think it very evident that the Quantity of Motion does and muſt continually vary.

3*dly*, A THIRD Reaſon that demonſtrates the Inactivity of Matter, is, That Bodies of equal Bulk or whoſe Surfaces are equal, do yet weigh unequally.

1*ſt*, BECAUSE there could be no ſuch Things in the World as Concretions of Matter, if Matter was ſelf-active. The preſent Face of Matter appears to us to be divided into *Æther*, and an infinite Number of large Combinations of Matter floating in that *Æther*; whereas if Matter had been ſelf-active, it could never have concreted into ſuch Globes as thoſe of the fix'd Stars, Planets and Comets; but muſt have every-where appeared in the higheſt State of Fluidity, as fine as the preſent *Æther* in which they ſwim. For

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if Motion were eſſential to Matter, it muſt belong to every the ſmalleſt Part of Matter, and conſequently muſt be equally ſpread thro' the whole Maſs of Matter, and then no poſſible Reaſon to be given why ſome Parts of Matter ſhould be more divided than others, ſince every Atom of Matter muſt equally partake of the dividing Principle. This ſhews that there can be no Reaſon given upon this *Hypotheſis*, why the dividing Effect of Motion ſhould ever ceaſe till Matter was ground ſo ſmall as to be incapable of any further Diviſion; the Conſequence of which would be a World not at all like what we live in; and therefore ours can never be accounted for by any ſuch Scheme as *Toland*'s; but the Aſſiſtance of a GOD will be neceſſary for moving the Matter of the Univerſe, if we pretend to account for the Diverſity that is ſeen in the different Portions of Matter. But,

2*dly*, A SECOND Reaſon why Matter cannot be ſelf-active, is this; Becauſe there could be no Variation as

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to the Quantity of Motion, no increaſing nor leſſening the Quantity of it; for if Motion be eſſential to every Particle of Matter, no one Particle of Matter can any otherwiſe loſe its Motion, but by loſing its Being in the Univerſe; and yet we think it very evident, that the Quantity of Motion does, and muſt continually diminiſh. 'Tis certain the greateſt Philoſopher that ever this Globe produced, is fully perſuaded that Motion muſt vary, that 'tis Generable and Corruptible: "But, he ſays, what by the Tena-"city of fluid Bodies, the Wearing of "their Parts, and the neceſſary im-"pairing of the elaſtick Force in ſo-"lid Bodies, the Quantity of Motion "muſt diminiſh rather than encreaſe, "unleſs the Loſs of Motion be repair-"ed by an Active BEING that can "ſupply thoſe Loſſes *." And 'tis certain, that he is ſupported in his Perſuaſion by a plain Matter of Fact, as in the Caſe of two hard Bodies of equal

* Newton's Opticks.

equal Force, that are not elaſtical; when ſuch Bodies meet together, they loſe all the Motion they were before poſſeſſed of. And if this be true, the next Enquiry to be made, is, What becomes of this Motion or active, impulſive Force? If it cannot be diſperſed among the Parts of ſuch Bodies, 'tis plain, that then all the Motion is entirely ſunk and loſt. That it cannot be ſo diſperſed, is as plain; becauſe the Parts of ſuch Bodies are incapable of any tremulous Motion for Want of Elaſticity; and if it ſhould be denied that the Parts of thoſe Bodies would loſe the Motion of their Wholes, there is this plain Argument againſt it, That it would then follow, that Bodies perfectly hard and elaſtical would reflect with a double Force, *viz.* the Force ariſing from the Elaſticity, and moreover all, or at leaſt, part of the original, direct Force; which, as the very Learned Dr. *Samuel Clark* has obſerved in his Letters to *Leibnitz*, is contrary to Experience.

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I CANNOT but obſerve by way of Inference from the loſs of Inanimate Motion, that as the Original Laws of Motion could never have taken Place, or had any Being in the World, unleſs there did Exiſt ſomething Superior to Matter that had Impreſſed thoſe Laws of Motion upon it; ſo thoſe Laws could never have continued, unleſs there were an Active Being in Nature, that was always ready to Exert upon Matter a certain Force or Activity, in proportion as the Motion was diminiſhed; which proves the Exiſtence of a BEING, that not only gave Motion to Matter, but alſo of a BEING that ſtill continues conſtantly to repair the weakning by Time of the firſt Impreſſion of Motion. And this ſhews the Neceſſity of admitting a Governour of the World, who by his Providence may Interpoſe in the preſervation of it, as well as of an Original Author of Motion, and of this World, which is an Effect of a wonderful Direction of that Motion. From whence it follows, That the Notion of ſome Perſons who believe

lieve that GOD had Impreſſed a certain Quantity of Motion upon Matter at the Creation, and then left it to ſhift for itſelf, believing this to be a ſufficient Account of the Appearances of Things, cannot poſſibly be true; becauſe we have already ſhewn, that the Quantity of Motion muſt neceſſarily diminiſh, unleſs there was ſome Active BEING that could *conſtantly* keep it up in the ſame State and Condition. And if the Inanimate Part of the World could not have been preſerved in Motion without the continued Action of ſome BEING putting forth its Force according to thoſe Original Laws of Motion, much leſs could the Bodies of Plants and Animals, which are vaſtly the moſt conſiderable Parts of our Earth be formed and preſerved by Matter directed at firſt according to any whatever Laws of Motion. From hence too it appears, that GOD does not act as an *Anima Mundi*, not as a Part, but as a Governor of the World; becauſe ſuch a Being would be nothing but Fate and Nature, which

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can never be reconciled with the apparent Diminution of the Quantity of Motion in the Univerſe; as Fate or Nature muſt always act to the utmoſt of their Powers; and therefore if the Effect of their Activity could be at any Time abated, it could never be reſtored or repaired again. Conſequently we have gained a BEING that not only made the World, and eſtabliſhed at the Beginning the Laws by which it ſhould for the future be governed; but alſo a BEING that ſtill watches over his Workmanſhip, repairs any Failures in it, and continues it in its State as long as He thinks fit: Which is the Religious Man's Notion of a GOD, a BEING that is not far from any of us; *For* 'tis *in Him we live, move, and have our Beings.*

SERMON VII.

ACTS XVII. 28.

For in Him we live, and move, and have our Being.

HAVING already ſhewn, That if we will not admit a GOD for a mover of Matter, there will be only theſe two poſſible Ways of accounting for its being in the World, either in ſuppoſing an Infinite Series of Impulſes or Communications of Motion from one Part of Matter to another, without any Original Cauſe of thoſe Impulſes,

which is ſuppoſing an Effect without ſuppoſing any Cauſe of that Effect: Or,

2*dly*, THAT Motion is an eſſential Attribute of Matter, and therefore all Matter an active Being.

IN anſwer to the ſuppos'd Activity of Matter, I propos'd to ſhew,

1*ſt*, THAT our Idea of Matter, is a compleat and adequate Conception of it when we leave Motion out of it.

2*dly*, THAT it would not follow, that Matter was an active Being, were it, never ſo true, that every Particle of Matter was in Motion. And

3*dly*, THAT the Activity of Matter is inconſiſtent with ſome Appearances in Nature: As,

1*ſt*, WITH the great Diverſity that appears in the Face of Nature, that ſome Parts of Matter are condens'd into ſolid Bodies, and others in a high Degree of Rarefaction; whereas if Matter was ſelf-active, the Whole muſt neceſſarily be reduced into the ſmalleſt Particles into which Matter is capable of being divided. A ſecond Reaſon I gave, why Motion could not be an

eſſential

eſſential Attribute of Matter was, becauſe there could then be no Variation as to the Quantity of Motion in the Univerſe, and yet 'twas evident that the Quantity of it muſt gradually diminiſh, unleſs its Loſſes were conſtantly repaired by ſome active Being. Thus far I proceeded in the laſt Diſcourſe.

A 3d Reaſon by which I propoſed to ſhew the Inactivity of Matter was from hence, That Bodies of equal Bulk or whoſe Surfaces are equal, do yet weigh unequally; for if there is no accounting for this *Phænomenon*, without ſuppoſing the heavier Body to contain more Matter than the lighter one of the ſame Bulk, then 'tis plain, that Matter muſt be an inactive Being, ſince the encreaſing the Quantity of Matter in any Body, tho' there be no encreaſe of its Surface, by which its Motion might be retarded, ſhall encreaſe the Difficulty of putting it into Motion: This very Argument will hang as a Milſtone upon the Neck of the *Atheiſt*, as it makes it impoſſible to reconcile this

Phænomenon of Nature with the Mechanical Laws of Motion, which is all that the *Infidel* has to depend upon for the Support of his *Hypotheſis*. For 'tis certain that all Mechanical Cauſes do act in proportion to the Surfaces of the Particles that they act upon; whereas 'tis as certain, that Gravity, whatever be the Cauſe of it, acts proportionally to the Quantity of ſolid Matter, without any regard to the Superficies of the Bodies; ſo as Bodies which are the ſame in Bulk, ſhall be very different in their Weight. *Lucretius* ſaw plainly that there was no accounting for the different Gravity of Bodies of equal Bulk, without having recourſe to a *Vacuum*, and ſuppoſing a greater Quantity of Matter in the heavier Body. He indeed, very weakly ſuppoſes Gravity to be an inherent Quality in Matter, and that all Bodies had a natural Tendency downwards, tho' we are ſure there could be no ſuch thing as downward or upward in an infinite Space. But however, he ſaw evidently that the general Activity of Matter, which he believed

believed as well as *Toland*, would not account for this *Phænomenon*, without admitting another Principle of Action, *viz.* Gravity; he believed his Atoms had been in Motion from Eternity, but did not think *that* Motion sufficient to account for the different Gravitation of Bodies towards a Centre *,"

LET us now see how *Toland* would derive this peculiar Affection of Matter, *viz.* of moving towards a Centre, from the general Action of Matter; or how he would account for the *unequal* Resistance of Bodies of *equal* Bulk. It will quickly appear that he is so far from being able to derive Gravity from the

* Denique cur alias aliis præstare videmus
Pondere res rebus, nihilo majore figurâ.
Nam si tantundem est in Lanæ glomere quantum
Corporis in Plumbo est, tantundem pendere [par est,
Corporis Officium est quoniam premere omnia [deorsum:
Ergo quod magnum est æque, leviusque videtur,
Nimirum Plus esse sibi declarat Inanis:
At contra gravius plus in se Corporis esse.
Vide Lucretium. Lib. I.

general Action of Matter, that this very Gravity proves to a Demonſtration the Inactivity of Matter. 'Tis plain, as I have already obſerved, that all Mechanical Cauſes act by Contact, and upon the Surface of Bodies; and 'tis as plain, that Gravity acts quite otherwiſe, and affects the ſolid Contents of Bodies, by penetrating the very Subſtances of them, and therefore can never be produced by the general Action of Matter, becauſe that is ſuppos'd to act ſuperficially, as all Mechanical Cauſes are wont to do. But ſuppoſing it poſſible to derive Gravity from the general Action of Matter, which *Toland* aims at, it would do him no Service, becauſe he cannot avoid making an increaſe of Gravity, and conſequently of Reſiſtance to Motion, to depend upon an increaſe of Matter: For he ſuppoſes the Centripetal Force to be, not indeed as *Lucretius*, a Quality inherent in Matter, but one of the Modes of *Action* in general, or a particular Determination of the general Activity of Matter. Let it be ſo; ſince 'tis

evident

evident, that the Quantity of Motion in the Body muſt be the Sum of the Motive Forces of all the Particles of Matter that are in that Body; if this Centripetal Force be only a particular Determination of the general Action of Matter, there would be no giving a Reaſon why the Quantity of that Force, or of that particular Determination too, ſhould not be computed after the ſame manner; and be the Sum of all the ſelf-moving Atoms in any Body; the Conſequence of which would be, That whenever we obſerved two Bodies of equal Bulk and Gravitating unequally, or tending towards a Centre with unequal Force, if we would account for ſuch a *Phænomenon* conſiſtently with *Toland*'s Account of Gravity, we muſt ſay, that one of the Bodies had a greater Number of the Self-moving Atoms than the other, which neceſſarily ſuppoſes in the lighter Body a Space void of Matter, which levels one of the ſtrongeſt Retrenchments of the *Infidel*, *viz.* The Infinity of Matter, and at the ſame time its Activity: Be-

cauſe Experience tells us, That the more weighty any Body is, tho' nothing be added to its Bulk, the more it reſiſts to Motion; whereas if Matter was an active Being, an increaſe of its Quantity could never increaſe its Reſiſtance, unleſs its Surface, by which alone Bodies could be retarded, was increaſed too. All that *Toland* has to ſay for himſelf, is, "That this Diffe-"rence of Reſiſtance in Bodies of equal "Bulk, may poſſibly ariſe from the dif-"ferent internal Contexture of thoſe Bo-"dies"; and all the Reaſon for ſuch a Suſpicion is drawn from the great Reſiſtance that ſome Fluids are obſerved to make above others, altho' of near the ſame ſpecifick Gravity, and conſequently near the ſame Quantity of Matter; which can be reſolved into nothing, but a Difference in the internal Contexture of ſuch Fluids: But this Plea can have Force only in ſuch Bodies as are not equally fluid. For whatever be the Figure of the Internal Parts of Fluids, if they are equally devoid of Tenacity, their Force of Reſiſtance to any

any particular Determination as well as the abſolute Force of Motion, can be only the Sum of the Forces of the Self-moving Particles in thoſe Bodies. And therefore if a Cubical Inch of Water, and the ſame Quantity of Quick-ſilver, which are fluid Bodies, and free from Tenacity, did really contain the ſame Number of Self-moving Particles, whatever were the Figure of thoſe Particles, they would *equally* reſiſt to any Change that ſhould be made of the Determination of their Motion. But as Experience ſhews this to be falſe; conſequently, that fluid which makes the greateſt Reſiſtance to Motion, muſt have the greateſt Quantity of Matter; and then the different internal Contexture of Bodies will not account for their different Weights, nor clear Matter from the Imputation of being inactive. But,

4*thly*, I AM now to ſhew, That the Objections againſt GOD's being the Author of Motion, are not ſuch as ſhould diſcourage any rational and unbiaſs'd Perſon from acknowledging, that 'tis in GOD we live and have our animal Being.

Being. The Difficulties that are raiſed againſt GOD's being the Author of Motion, are theſe:

1ſt, "THAT we cannot conceive "how an Immaterial BEING, ſuch "as GOD is ſuppoſed to be, could act "upon Matter, conſequently, how He "ſhould move it.

2dly, "THAT if it were poſſible "for Him to be the Author of Motion, there would be, as *Toland* thinks, "this evil Conſequence attending ſuch "a Suppoſition, that GOD muſt be the "ſole Cauſe of all the Evil and Wickedneſs that is committed by Men; "'twill then be GOD that actually "*moves the Tongue of a lying Witneſs, "the Hand and Dagger of a Murderer.*"

THE firſt Objection is grounded upon this, "That nothing but Matter "can move Matter. This is proved thus; "That the Mobility of Matter, "or its Capacity of receiving Motion, "is wholly founded upon its Impenetrability or Reſiſtance; by the Means "of which 'tis qualified for hindring "any thing from coming into its Place

"till

" till 'tis removed out of it; and con-
" ſequently, the Active Principle muſt
" be a Material or Solid Being, be-
" cauſe Matter could make no Reſiſt-
" ance to the Action of a Being that
" was not Material, and therefore could
" not be moved by it, as there can
" be no Action without a Reaction
" or Reſiſtance on the Part of Mat-
" ter." In anſwer to this it may be ſaid, that tho' this Argument ſhould hold good in all the Mechanical Communications of Motion from one Parcel of Matter to another, yet it would prove nothing to the Purpoſe in the Preſent Caſe, unleſs it was big with another Proof, *viz.* That all Cauſes muſt be Mechanical Ones. Suppoſing the Exiſtence of ſuch a Thing as Motion, which our *Atheiſts* will not venture to deny, we have made it evident that an Infinite Series of Impulſes without any Original Cauſe of thoſe Impulſes is a plain Impoſſibility and direct Nonſenſe, and alſo that the Self-Activity of Matter is not only repugnant to the Conceptions we have

have of it, but is inconſiſtent with ſome Appearances in Nature: And therefore, tho' we could not give a ſatisfactory Anſwer to thoſe Objections againſt an Immaterial Agents being the Author of Motion, it would by no Means follow that he was not. When *Zeno* was raiſing Difficulties againſt the Poſſibility of Motion, a Man in Company with him roſe up and walk'd; this has been always look'd upon as a ſufficient Anſwer, tho' no particular Solution was given of the Objections. If there are but Three poſſible Ways of accounting for Motion, and Two of them be evidently falſe, we ſhall have as good Evidence for the Third's being the true Account of Motion, as the Man that walk'd had for the Exiſtence of Motion. And therefore how difficult ſoever it may be to conceive the Action of an Immaterial Being upon a Material One, yet as there is no other poſſible Way left, every unbyaſs'd Perſon muſt and ought to have Recourſe to a GOD, for a Solution of this *Phænomenon*.

BUT

BUT farther we have ſeen already that there is a Principle of Action in Virtue of which Bodies act upon one another in a different Manner from what they would do by the Mechanical Laws of Motion, *viz.* Gravitation. Whatever be the Cauſe of this Action, the Fact is evident, that it penetrates the ſolid Subſtances of Bodies, and therefore its Action cannot be founded upon the Impenetrability of Matter, or the Reſiſtance it makes to it; it going beyond the Surface of Bodies. Whereas the Argument againſt an Immaterial Being's acting upon Matter is founded upon this Suppoſition, that there can be no Action upon Bodies but by Contact or Striking upon the Surfaces, and the conſequent Reſiſtance that Body makes to ſuch a Shock or Impulſe; which being evidently falſe, the Argument drawn from it can be of no Moment.

BUT this is not all; when we come to conſider the Matter cloſely, I am perſuaded we ſhall find as much Difficulty

ficulty in conceiving how Matter acts upon Matter, as in conceiving how an Immaterial Subſtance ſhould act upon a Material One: For I will venture to referr it to any unprejudic'd Perſon, whether he cannot as eaſily conceive that an Immaterial Being may act upon Matter without Corporeal Contact, as that an Impulſe upon a Part of the Body ſhould move the whole Body; for nothing can account for this, but the Adheſion of the Parts of Body to each other, which is as much beyond our Conception of the diviſible Nature of Matter, as the Action of Immaterial upon Material; and the Difficulty of conceiving it would encreaſe upon our Hands, if we ſhould ſuppoſe with *Toland* that every Particle of Matter was Self-active; becauſe then, as we before obſerved, all Matter muſt neceſſarily be in the higheſt State of Fluidity, and conſequently the Particles of Matter could have little or no Union with one another.

2*dly*, THE

2*dly*, THE other Objection againſt GOD's being the Author of Motion, is this; "That then He muſt be the "ſole Cauſe of all the immoral Actions "that Men are ſuppos'd to be guilty "of; As when a Man bears falſe Wit-"neſs, it is not the Man that bears falſe "Witneſs, but GOD that gives Moti-"on to his Tongue; when he commits "Murder, it is GOD that does it, be-"cauſe 'tis GOD that moves his Hand "and the Dagger by which he com-"mits this Act." Whatever Strength there is in this Objection, it muſt entirely rely upon the Truth of this Suppoſition, That if GOD were the Original Author of Motion, nothing elſe, no other Being whatſoever could have this Power of moving Matter: And the Reaſon of this muſt be, either becauſe this is a Power which is in the Nature of the Thing incommunicable, as much ſo as neceſſary Exiſtence and Independence, or at leaſt, that 'tis ſuch a Power as Man is incapable of receiving: If neither of theſe be true, this Objection muſt amount to nothing.

As

As to the first Reason; If we contended for a Power of acting as we pleas'd, where and as long as we pleas'd, and this independently of GOD, we might be thought to plead for a Power which could not be disposed of, because there cannot be two or more Independent Beings, no more than there can be two or more Gods: But if when we contend for a Power of Self-motion in Man, we only mean a finite or limited Power, confined to a small Portion of Matter, and wholly depending upon the first MOVER for its Continuance, no Reason can be given why such a Power as this may not be co mmunicated. And therefore Mr. *Bayle* need not have put on such an Air of Concern, as he affects to do * at the *Hypothesis* of free Agents; as if the admitting such particular Self-movers must necessarily exclude an Universal Mover. He brings an Instance from the *Chinese*, among which

* In voce Spinosa.

which People the Belief it ſeems of many Self-movers had this Effect; the firſt Univerſal MOVER being wholly left out of their Syſtem of Religion. But then it muſt be obſerved, That the Belief of Free Beings had not this Effect, till they had ſo far ſunk the Notion of a GOD, as to make Him only an *Anima Mundi*, that was acted upon by Matter, as our Souls are acted upon by our Bodies; and had raiſed the particular Souls, that animated the ſeveral Parts of the World, to ſuch an Height, as to be almoſt entirely independent upon Him; which is the *Chineſe Philoſophy*, as Mr. *Loubiere* aſſures us. But ſo long as 'tis acknowledged, that the Self-moving Power is derived from GOD, and depends upon Him for its Continuance; ſo long as 'tis confeſſed, that in Him we *live, and move*, ſo long there can be no Fear of ſhutting out a GOD, from our taking in free Agents. And I am perſuaded Mr. *Bayle* * would have ſeen no Danger to Religion from free Agency, if this had not threatned his darling

* *Bayle's* Dictionary, Voce Spinoſa.

Notion of a Principle of Evil; for he could eaſily ſee that all his Arguments drawn from the Moral Evil that appears in the World, muſt loſe much of their Force, if once Free Agents were allowed of; becauſe then GOD might be the Original Cauſe of Motion, and yet not the Cauſe of Moral Evil, of the wicked Acts committed by Men, or of the blaſphemous Words they ſometimes utter. But,

2dly, As to the other Reaſon, That granting ſome Degree of this Power might be communicated, that yet Man would be a Subject incapable of receiving any ſuch Power; 'tis confeſſed, that GOD cannot give any Powers or Qualities to a Being that are inconſiſtent with that Nature which He has already given it, and that ſuch a Being would be incapable of receiving them; that *Axiom* in *Philoſophy* being very true, *Quicquid recipitur, ad modum Recipientis recipitur*; therefore that GOD could not give to Matter a Power of moving itſelf, becauſe Matter is naturally and eſſentially Inactive; and conſequently the com-

communicating ſuch a Power to it, would be deſtroying its Nature, and making it ceaſe to be what it is. And if Man was altogether a Material Being, the Argument might be a juſt one; but as we have already ſhewn, That the Author of Motion cannot be a Material Being, the *Atheiſt* will never be able to prove, that there cannot exiſt other Beings beſides him that are not Material, and which may therefore be capable, tho' Matter be not, of receiving from GOD a Power of moving themſelves, or of beginning Motion.

THE *Atheiſt* will perhaps ſay, That if the Immateriality of an Infinite BEING be conceiveable, yet not the Immateriality of a Finite or Limited one; becauſe 'tis not eaſy to ſee what an Immaterial BEING ſhould be limited or confined by, nor what ſhould give it any particular Locality, or ſeparate one Immaterial BEING from another; that if we ſuppoſe them to be diſtinguiſhed from one another by the different Syſtems of Matter that they animate; we ſhall be forced to ſuppoſe ſomething ve-

ry unintelligible, becauſe Matter is perfectly heterogeneous to Immaterial Being: And whatever is ſuch, can have no kind of Relation to it, and therefore not that of terminating its Eſſence, and by neceſſary Conſequence we muſt be miſtaken in accounting for human Actions by an Immaterial Principle, and then 'tis already granted, that God muſt be the ſole Cauſe of all a Man's Actions, and therefore of his wicked ones too.

To avoid the Force of this Argument, ſome have fallen into a Notion of an *Anima Mundi* that informed the Bodies of all Animals, and conſequently, that all that which we call particular Souls, was really one and the ſame Soul; that the Difference in different Individuals, was not a real, but only a ſeeming Difference; that it was every where the ſame numerical Soul that animated the ſeveral particular Syſtems of Matter, all the different Bodies of Individuals. But this was getting clear of one Difficulty at the expence of a much greater one. For if we have any

clear

clear Ideas, they are certainly thoſe which concern Identity. And yet nothing can be more evident than this, That whatever it is that thinks in ſeveral Individuals, it cannot be one and the ſame in all of them, becauſe that which thinks in each Individual, thinks only for itſelf, and knows nothing of what paſſes in another, and therefore cannot be the ſame in both of them, no more than in two Atoms of Matter, one of them can be the ſame with the other. For Conſciouſneſs will be as neceſſary to the Identity of a Thinking Being, as the ſame Particles of Matter can be to conſtitute the ſame Material Being.

BUT in anſwer to the Difficulties of ſuppoſing Souls to be immaterial, and yet ſeparate or diſtinct Portions of Immateriality, it would be ſufficient to ſay, that Immaterial Beings may be ſeparated from each other, tho' we could not conceive what it was that ſhould bound or ſeparate them; becauſe the narrow Faculties of our Minds cannot be ſuppoſed to take in all poſſible

Modes of Being. This I ſay would be a ſufficient Anſwer to this Difficulty; for a Difficulty that owes all its Strength to our Weakneſs, can never be a good Argument. If it could be one, then the Difficulty of conceiving the Action of Immaterial upon Material, would ſufficiently prove that there neither was nor could be any ſuch Thing, and yet we have already ſhewn it muſt be true with regard to One Immaterial BEING, *viz.* GOD; and no one will pretend to ſay, that there is any more Difficulty in conceiving the Limitation of Immaterial Beings, than there is in conceiving this very Action of Immaterial upon Material. The limited Nature therefore of an human Soul ought no more to be urged as a Proof of its being Material, than its acting upon an human Body be brought as an Argument to prove it a Body too. Since then the Soul may be immaterial, conſequently GOD may have communicated to it a Power of Self-motion; and then Man and not GOD, will be the immediate Cauſe of all the evil Actions that are com-

committed by him, and none of thoſe ill Conſequences will attend the Suppoſition of GOD's being the Original Author of Motion, which *Toland* ſeemed to be afraid of. And then too he might have exchanged his ſingular Opinion concerning the eſſential Activity of Matter, for the Religious one which makes GOD the Cauſe of its Motion.

I HAVE inſiſted the longer upon this Point of Motion, becauſe if I have well proved, That there is no introducing Motion into the World without admitting a Being diſtinct from Matter, the *Atheiſt* muſt then be contented to give over all Speculations concerning the Nature of the Univerſe, and of the Cauſes of that Variety we ſee in it; for no body will mind ſuch an *Empirick* in *Philoſophy*, as pretends to furniſh us with a World, when he knows not where to look for a Being that would be able to move the Materials out of which he is to raiſe the Fabrick of it. For this is plainly to introduce an Effect without being able to aſſign a Cauſe of that Effect.

FROM the Poſſibility of GOD's communicating to ſome Beings, as Men, a Power of beginning Motion, I cannot but obſerve the Hazard which the *Atheiſt* runs, if he ſhould be miſtaken in his Clock-work Scheme, and he and the reſt of his Fellow-Creatures ſhould prove to be ſomething more than mere Mechaniſm; becauſe if he had a Power of directing any of his Actions with Freedom, he might be accountable for his Behaviour in ſuch Actions, if there was any Being that could and would take account of them. This Propoſition carries with it ſo much Evidence, that I believe the *Atheiſt* will not venture to diſpute it.

I HAVE already ſhewn, That there muſt be a Principle of Motion diſtinct from Matter; that ſome Appearances in Nature prove to a Demonſtration, that this Principle of Motion does not act as an *Anima Mundi*, but with the utmoſt Freedom; and therefore may take Account of the *Atheiſt*'s Behaviour, if by Freedom of acting he is qualified to give ſuch Account. It will

there-

therefore very much concern him to be well aſſured, notwithſtanding we have ſhewn, That there are, and muſt be Cauſes that act not by any Laws of Mechaniſm, that yet Man does; and yet if there are other than Mechanical Cauſes upon our Earth, the *Atheiſt* cannot deny that Man may put in as fair as any Thing whatever for being one of them; and therefore he may do well to conſider which way he can poſſibly ſatisfy himſelf that he is not one of them. Eſpecially too when every Man thinks he feels within himſelf in many of his Actions a Power of beginning Motion at Pleaſure, and independently of any external Mover. But,

2*dly*, If the Difficulties attending the Religious Scheme of God's being the Author of Motion, be ſuch as may reaſonably be accounted for; the *Sceptick* too may do well to conſider, whether his mere doubting what is true or falſe on account of thoſe Difficulties, will be a ſufficient Juſtification of him for not embracing Religion. Whether he ought not rather to enter into a care-

careful Review of those Objections, for Fear his Inclination to doubt of every Thing might have tempted him to take for Difficulties those which are not really such. The Lazy Part of Mankind, who have some Wit and less Learning, despairing to gain any Credit by forming Schemes that would give some tolerable Account of Things, have in all Ages chose the much easier Task of puzzling, than of clearing up any Thing. They do not pretend to tell you, as the *Atheist* does, how the Matter of the Universe may be stirred without the Assistance of a GOD; but only, "That there are so many Difficulties in accounting for Motion either with or without a GOD, that they cannot see which Side of the Question preponderates; and therefore hope they may be justified in Doubting where the Truth lies." Tho' I should think that rejecting Religion when a Man pretends not to see any thing else to be true, should be more Criminal, than rejecting Religion because a Man sees, or thinks he sees some

ſome other Thing to be the Truth, and conſequently, the *Sceptick* will not run leſs Hazard than the *Atheiſt*, if his doubting concerning Religion, as well as the other's poſitive Denial of it, ſhould at laſt prove to be ill-grounded. Perhaps the Security which both of them might promiſe themſelves, ſuppoſing them to be miſtaken in denying or doubting the Exiſtence of a Firſt MOVER diſtinct from Matter, would be this: That altho' there ſhould exiſt ſuch an Original Cauſe of Motion, yet it might not be an Intelligent Being, and therefore they ſhould be ſafe, as it could take no Cognizance of what they were doing here. But I believe it would be hard enough for any Man to conceive Freedom without Intelligence. 'Tis poſſible indeed to conceive an Intelligent Being without Freedom of Action; but there is no conceiving how a Being ſhould act freely without knowing what it does, and why it does any Thing; but the Intelligence of the Supreme BEING will be made evident, when we come to ſhew, that Matter cannot be the Subject of Intelligence.

SERM.

SERMON VIII.

ACTS XVII. 28.

For in Him we live, and move, and have our Being.

HAVING already ſhewn, That there is no introducing Motion into the World without the Help of a Being diſtinct from Matter, it would be plain enough that without ſuch a BEING, no ſuch Thing as Thought or Intelligence could ever have had an Exiſtence in the World. For if Motion be neceſſary for the making Matter an Intelligent Being, as

as it must be if *Spinosa*'s or *Hobbs*'s Notion of Perception, which places it in the Action and Re-action of Bodies upon one another, were the Truth, then Intelligence could not be an essential Attribute of Matter, unless Motion was so too; and therefore must have some external Cause of its Being: This, I say, would be sufficient to shew, That *Spinosa*'s Notion concerning the Existence of Intelligence, is altogether unphilosophical; because in such Case, Cogitation would be made to arise from nothing, unless he could believe this great Absurdity, *viz.* That Thought and Extension were the same Thing, or that Extension whether in Motion or at Rest was endued with actual Perception: Altho' if we can judge at all of the Nature of Intelligence from our own Perceptions, we must observe the Action of external Objects to be necessary to our having any actual Perception of what passes without us. *Toland* was so sensible of the Force of this Reasoning, that in his Discourse concerning Motion, he gives up *Spinosa*

as

as a Perſon, that upon this Account is not to be defended. "The *Spinoſiſts*, ſays he, "have afforded Matter of Tri-"umph to the *Spiritualiſts*, (for ſuch he calls the Believers of a GOD) "by ac-"knowledging the Inactivity of Mat-"ter; for in this they were ſo unphilo-"ſophical as to aſſign an Effect with-"out any Cauſe of it; as in the Caſe "of Cogitation, when they made it "to belong to all Matter, and yet al-"lowed Matter to be naturally with-"out Motion or inactive *." And yet as unphiloſophical as it is to make Thought ariſe from ſtill or inactive Matter, it will preſently appear that thoſe have not much the Advantage, who are forced to pump Senſe and Intelligence out of ſenſeleſs and unintelligent, tho' active Matter. Yet *Toland* muſt do this, or elſe with us confeſs, That there is ſome Eternal, Intelligent BEING that is the Cauſe of all the Intelligence which is ſeen in Mankind.

FOR

* See his Letter concerning Motion.

FOR there are but three poſſible Ways of accounting for the Exiſtence of Thought or Intelligence:

1*ſt*, EITHER by ſuppoſing it an eſſential Attribute of Matter, as much ſo as Extenſion or Solidity; which is the Way *Spinoſa* and Mr. *Hobbs* have taken. Or,

2*dly*, IN ſuppoſing that 'tis not eſſential to Matter, but is an Effect of the Motion of Objects on ſome particular Arrangement of the Parts of Matter; ſuch as is ſeen in the Bodies of Animals. Or,

3*dly*, THAT there is in all Intelligent Beings a Principle diſtinct from Matter, and of a different Nature, from whence Thought or Intelligence does ariſe; which is the Opinion of the Religious Man. Mr. *Lock*, indeed, ſuppoſes a fourth Way of accounting for Intelligence: "That tho' Matter was "a thoughtleſs and ſenſeleſs Being, and "no Diſpoſition of the Parts of it, how "curiouſly ſoever they might be put "together, would ever naturally riſe "up into Thought and Underſtanding,

"and

"and tho' there was no Principle of "Thought in Man diſtinct from Mat-"ter; that yet GOD by his infinite "Power might ſuperadd a Thinking "Quality to Body or Matter." But were this poſſible, it would do the *Atheiſt* no Service, becauſe it ſuppoſes the Being of a GOD as neceſſary to the producing ſuch an Effect upon Matter as that of Intelligence; or if it could at all favour him, it muſt then fall in with the ſecond Way of accounting for Thought, *viz.* That ſuch a Quality as Thought might *poſſibly* ariſe from Matter diſpoſed in ſuch a Manner as are the Bodies of Animals, there being nothing in the Nature of Matter that ſhould make it incapable of receiving Intelligence, and conſequently, if the Bodies of Animals could be formed without the Help of a GOD, there would be no Want of Him in accounting for that Thought and Intelligence which belongs to thoſe Bodies. But this, ſo far as the *Atheiſt* is concerned in it, is exactly the ſame with the ſecond Way of accounting for Intelligence; and there-

fore I ſhall paſs it over without any farther Remark.

AND proceed to a Conſideration of the two Atheiſtick Accounts of Intelligence, and in Oppoſition to them; I will ſhew, That Intelligence cannot be an eſſential Attribute of Matter, nor an Effect of any peculiar Structure of the Parts of a ſenſeleſs Being, ſuch as Matter is ſuppoſed to be by the ſecond Scheme.

1*ſt*, THAT Intelligence cannot be eſſential to Matter.

THAT which gave *Spinoſa* the Hardineſs of advancing the Eſſentiality of Thought to Matter was, That he thought he could not be diſproved in his Aſſertion, becauſe we did not ſufficiently know the Nature of Intelligence to determine concerning the Subject of Thought; or to ſay what Sort of Being it muſt be that is capable of having ſuch a Quality; and therefore Matter might be the Subject of it, for any thing we could ſay to the contrary. But the Anſwer to this is plain; Tho' I do not know all I could wiſh concerning Thought and the Subject of it;

it; yet I may know that Thought is not Extenſion; which is enough for our preſent Purpoſe: Becauſe I ſhall ſhew, That it muſt be Extenſion, if it be an eſſential Attribute of Matter. I may be certain, I ſay, that Thought cannot be Extenſion; becauſe to affirm this, would be juſt as if we ſhould affirm, that any Conſequence of Extenſion, ſuch as a Triangular or Square Figure, and the Perception that the Mind has of ſuch a Figure, were the ſame Thing; but the Ideas of the Trine Dimenſion and Thought, are ſo evidently different, that the Things repreſented by thoſe Ideas cannot poſſibly be the ſame, unleſs all our Perceptions are mere Deceptions; and then 'tis to no Purpoſe to argue at all. But 'tis the *Sceptick*, not the *Atheiſt* that pretends to defend himſelf in this Way, whereas the latter always brings Reaſons, ſuch as they are, in Support of a contrary Scheme to the Religious one. It muſt then be granted me, that Thought and Extenſion cannot be the ſame Thing, and therefore we are only to ſhew,

That *Spinoſa*'s Notion of Thought's being eſſential to Matter, does by neceſſary Conſequence make Thought and Extenſion the ſame Thing.

THAT there can be no real Difference between them, may be made evident by this one Conſideration, That ſuppoſing them really different, one of them muſt ariſe from Nothing; for both Thought and Extenſion cannot be neceſſarily exiſtent, if there be a real Difference between them, any more than there can be two Neceſſarily-exiſtent Beings, which *Spinoſa*, as well as we, denies: And yet by this Scheme of Things, Thought cannot be a Mode of Extenſion, or derivable from it, but muſt be equally Self-exiſtent with Extenſion. *Spinoſa* indeed pretends to aſſert, That the ſame Numerical Subſtance may have an infinite Number of eſſential Attributes, and of theſe he names particularly Thought and Extenſion, as different Attributes of the ſame Subſtance. But if the Difference he means, be a real, and not a notional, or at leaſt a modal Difference, the

the Subſtances or Subjects of thoſe different Attributes muſt be different too, otherwiſe he deſtroys the Foundation of all our Reaſoning, which is laid in this *Axiom*, That thoſe Things which agree with a third, muſt agree among themſelves: And therefore if Thought and Extenſion were ſo united together as to conſtitute the ſame Eſſence or Being, and not different Beings, they muſt be the ſame in Reality, and not different from one another, any more than the ſame Subſtance can differ from itſelf. For, if every Part of Matter be endued with Perception, and every Part of it extended, unleſs Extenſion and Thought be of the ſame Nature, or one of them a Mode of the other, it will be impoſſible to conceive how they ſhould conſtitute the ſame Subſtance or Being; there being no Room left for a real Difference, when the Whole and every Particle of Matter is ſuppoſed to be both extended and intelligent.

THAT which led *Spinoſa* into this Miſtake was, his confounding notional

Attributes with real ones; as appears from what he ſays in one of his Epiſtles in theſe Words: *Quod autem addis, nos ex definitione cujuſque rei conſideratæ unicam tantum proprietatem deducere valere, locum habet in rebus ſimpliciſſimis vel entibus rationis, at non in realibus. Nam ex hoc ſolo quod Deum definio eſſe ens ad cujus Eſſentiam pertinet Exiſtentia, plures ejus proprietates concludo, nempe quod neceſſario exiſtit, quod ſit Unicus, Immutabilis, Infinitus, &c. Et ad hunc modum plura alia Exempla afferre poſſem quæ impræſentiarum omitto* *. But there is nothing plainer than that thoſe Attributes of GOD he has inſtanced in, and which he calls Properties, do no otherwiſe differ from each other, than as any other abſtracted Notions of Mind do differ from one another. For the Oneneſs of GOD, his Immutability and Infinity, are Properties neceſſarily flowing from a Neceſſarily-exiſtent Nature, and cannot poſſibly be ſeparated from ſuch a Nature

* Vide Spinoſæ Epiſtol. 78. p. 598, 599.

ture without deſtroying it. Which ſhews them to be only partial Conſiderations, and not really different Attributes of the Divine Nature. Thus for Inſtance, the Exiſtence of the Divine Nature may be conſidered without regard to Time or Place; but this is plainly a partial Conſideration, becauſe infinite Time and infinite Place, are the neceſſary Conſequences of ſuch an Exiſtence, and therefore cannot be really ſeparated from it. Thus then it appears by theſe Inſtances which *Spinoſa* has brought for the Support of his Opinion, that he did not diſtinguiſh between real and notional Attributes. And therefore that he has not proved it poſſible for Thought and Extenſion to be Attributes of the ſame Subſtance, ſuppoſing them really different.

BUT as our preſent Unbelievers ſeem more inclined to depend upon the ſecond Account of Intelligence, I ſhall proceed to conſider how the *Atheiſt* defends it, and what Arguments may be brought for the Support of it. All the Arguments that can be brought to

defend ſuch a Suppoſition as that which makes Thought to be Figure and Motion, or to ariſe from them, will be reduced to theſe: Either,

1*ſt*, THAT we are ignorant of the Nature of Thought *in what it conſiſts*; and therefore it may be for all we know only Matter curiouſly put together, as in the Bodies of Animals, and we know not all the Effects that may ariſe from Matter in Motion, and therefore Thought may be one of them; that the Difference between Thought and Figure can be no good Argument againſt it, becauſe we find certain Qualities, ſuch as Colours, Sounds and Taſtes, to be produced by the different Motions and Figures of Bodies, and therefore why not the Thoughts of the Mind, which are no more unlike to Figure and Motion than theſe are. Or,

2*dly*, IT may be ſaid that there is as much Difficulty in conceiving that Corporeal Motions ſhould excite different Ideas by acting upon an Immaterial Subſtance, *viz.* that certain Motions in Objects ſhould be the Reaſon

of

of there being conſtantly certain Senſations in an Immaterial BEING, as that Thought ſhould ariſe from ſome particular Situation of the Parts of Matter; and therefore where the Difficulties are equal, a Man may be at Liberty to take which Side of the Queſtion he pleaſes.

IN anſwer to the firſt Argument, That we are ignorant of the Nature of Thought, and know not all the Effects that may ariſe from Matter in Motion; We ſay, That we may know enough of the Nature of Thought, and the Nature of Body (without knowing every Thing belonging to either) which may ſatisfy us, That Thought cannot poſſibly ariſe from Matter or Body, manage it as cunningly as you will. What *Tully* has ſaid in his *Tuſculan* Queſtions in Anſwer to a like Objection, will be a juſt Anſwer to this, *An ſi omnia ad Intelligendum non habeo quæ habere vellem, ne iis quidem quæ habeo mihi uti licebit?* Becauſe we are ignorant of ſome Things which would much enlighten the Subject, it does not therefore ſure follow

follow that we may not make uſe of what we do underſtand concerning it. If we do not know what Thought or Perception is, nor know all the Effects that may poſſibly ariſe from all the poſſible Ways of putting Matter together; yet we may know ſo much of the Nature of Thought and Figure, as to ſee that Thought is not mere Figure, nor a mere Paſſion or Reception of the Motion of Bodies. And then who ſhall hinder us from declaring what we do know of it, for this Reaſon only, Becauſe we do not know every Thing belonging to it. I ſay, We may know that Thought is not Figure, altho' we know not every Thing belonging to Thought and Figure.

1ſt, BECAUSE in our Conceptions of Things, according to which we cannot help Judging, we find a real Difference between Thought and Figure, or between local Motion and the Perception of that Motion; and yet unleſs Thought be Figure and Motion, it will be impoſſible for any Man alive to conceive

conceive that Thought ſhould ariſe from either or both of them. If Extenſion or Matter was a Thinking Being, we might then indeed conceive that from a more or leſs curious Arrangement of the Parts of Body, might ariſe more or leſs perfect Ways of Thinking, ſtronger or fainter Degrees of Perception and Senſation. But theſe Men grant Matter as Matter, to be as ſtupid and ſenſeleſs as we could wiſh for. They acknowledge, that there is no more Excellency in the Atoms that compoſe the Eyes, Ears and Noſe of a Man, than there is in any other Atoms that enter into the Compoſition of Bodies that are the fartheſt removed from any Thing like Life or Perception, and yet would vainly pretend from a good Management of thoſe Atoms to derive Thought and Senſation. But let them prepare Matter as they will, ſo long as they confeſs it to be without Thought, they muſt have good Luck if they make any Body believe, that a ſingle Thought can ever be drawn out of her. Mr.

Bayle

Bayle confeſſes, "That all thoſe who "deny the Diſtinction between Soul "and Body, talk childiſhly, unleſs they "ſuppoſe the whole World to be ani-"mated or endued with Underſtand-"ing." And therefore in his Opinion, there is no conceiving the Exiſtence of Thinking Beings, ſuppoſing the Soul to be material, unleſs we believe all Mat-ter to be furniſhed with Thinking. And both *Spinoſa* and *Hobbs*, who could nei-ther of them endure the Belief of Im-material Beings, were plainly forced to take Shelter in ſuch a monſtrous Doctrine as the eſſential Intelligence of Matter, be-cauſe they ſaw there was no conceiving how the bare Movement of the Parts of Matter ſhould ever produce Thought, if there was originally no ſuch Thing as Thought in Matter. For he that ſays he can ſuppoſe the meer Diſpoſi-tion of the Organs of an human Bo-dy ſhall make a Subſtance to become thoughtful that had never Thought before, ſays what is impoſſible for him or any Man alive to conceive. For then he muſt make the Diſpoſition of the

the Organs of an human Body to be Thought, altho' every Body elſe ſees it can amount to nothing more than local Motion differently modified according to the Structure of thoſe Organs, as the Movements in a Clock or Watch are regulated by the Diſpoſition of its Wheels. But no Body has ever ventured to affirm, That he could clearly conceive local Motion alone to be ſufficient to make a Subſtance devoid of all Thought and every Sentiment, to paſs into actual Thought, or that any Subſtance could poſſibly paſs from a Privation of all Thought to actual Thought, merely by being moved. Becauſe this would be to ſay, That a Change of the Situation of the Parts of Matter, was a Senſe of Pleaſure and Pain, an Idea of Moral Virtue, of Truth or Falſhood, an Affirming or Denying a Propoſition, tho' at the ſame time we are ſure we know fully the Nature and Eſſence of Change of Situation, without conceiving any thing of Senſe or Perception as belonging to it. And therefore if an evident Difference

in

in our Ideas will prove any Difference in the Things themſelves of which they are the Ideas, Thought cannot be Motion or Figure, nor Motion or Figure be Thought.

ARISTOTLE, after he had as he thought ſufficiently provided by the Help of his Four Elements for all the Variety that appears in the Corporeal World, when he came to Thought, he preſently ſaw that his Elements would never help him out, becauſe mix them together in any Proportions he would, he ſaw no Likelihood of getting a ſingle Thought out of them. And therefore, as *Tully* tells us, he ſaw himſelf under a Neceſſity of ſupplying the Defect of his Four Elements by adding a fifth to them, out of which he might extract all the Faculties of the Soul. *Ariſtoteles cum quatuor illa nota genera principiorum eſſet complexus è quibus omnia orirentur, Quintam quandam Naturam cenſet eſſe, è qua ſit mens. Cogitare enim & providere & diſcere, & docere, & invenire aliquid, & tam multa alia meminiſſe, amare, odiſſe; cupere, timere; angi, lætari. Hæc &*

ſimilia

ſimilia eorum in horum quatuor generum nullo ineſſe putat. Tuſcul. Quæſt. And therefore the *Ariſtotelians* as they believed Beaſts to be Thinking Animals, would not truſt to the mere Organization of their Bodies for an Account of their Thinking; but contrived for them a ſubſtantial Form entirely diſtinct from the Arrangement of the Parts of their Bodies, which ſhould be the Cauſe of their Thinking; for this ſubſtantial Form, according to them, was neither Matter nor Body, nor compoſed of Matter. The *Carteſians* who on the contrary ſuppoſed Beaſts to be barely Material Beings, would not allow them to be Thinking Beings, or to have any real Senſe of Joy or Grief, Pleaſure or Pain: So impoſſible did it appear to both thoſe Sects of *Philoſophy* to reſolve Thought into mere Organization, or to make it a Mode of Extenſion. We may by the Way obſerve, that our modern *Atheiſt* does actually affirm Cogitation, Underſtanding and Volition, to be nothing but local Motion or Mechaniſm in the inward Parts of the Brain and Heart;

Heart; whereas the *Epicureans* went no farther than aſſerting them to be cauſed by Motion; but ſtill thought Motion and Cogitation to be different Things.

THE ſingular Notion which *Des Cartes* advanced concerning Brutes, That all their Actions, tho' ſome of them look'd like an Effect of Thinking, were yet nothing but the Movements of a Machine; and the Succeſs this Opinion met with in the World, did probably give our preſent *Atheiſt* the Hardineſs of affirming, That all Kind of Thought was nothing but Motion in a proper Structure of the Parts of Body. And it muſt be confeſſed, That if his Notions concerning the Actions of Brutes were true, there would be a plauſible Reaſon for reſolving all the Faculties of an human Mind into mere Mechaniſm; for altho' he did not allow Brutes to be Thinking Beings, yet ſo long as their Actions have an Appearance of good Senſe, if ſuch Appearances may be reſolved into the Powers of Mechaniſm, there would be no great Difficulty

culty in Accounting for the Operations of human Thought by the Help of a more curious and elaborate Organization; ſuch as that of an human Brain. For if ſuch Appearances of Thought, as thoſe in Brutes, might be nothing but Motion, why might not Reflection, and ſuch other Acts of the Mind by which we are wont to diſtinguiſh ourſelves from Brutes, be performed by Motion too? But I am perſuaded the more we conſider this Matter, the more it will appear impoſſible that Thought ſhould be Motion, or even that it ſhould be drawn out of any Conſtruction of Matter by the Help of any Degree of Motion whatſoever, unleſs a Way could be found out for furniſhing Matter with the Gift of Thinking. For ſo long as Matter or Extenſion has not that Gift, the *Atheiſt* will be forced to father upon it a Brat that has not any the leaſt Reſemblance to its Parent, to aſſign an Effect to a Cauſe that has no Kind of Relation to it. We ſee an evident Dependence that the Diviſibility of Matter has

upon ſolid Extenſion, we ſee in this Extenſion a Reaſon *a priori* of all that Variety of Figures that Matter is capable of receiving, and of all the Mechanical Qualities which depend upon its Figure. But the *Atheiſt* no more than we can ſee any Kind of Connexion, or any Dependence of Thought upon Figure or upon Extenſion in any Shape whatever. And therefore here is a *Phænomenon* in Nature for the Exiſtence of which, upon the Foot of *Atheiſm*, no Reaſon can be given.

I CAN ſee no Way the *Atheiſt* has left for retaining his Opinion of Thought depending upon the Organization of the Parts of Body, if he muſt acknowledge, that there is no Kind of Reſemblance between Thought and Figure; unleſs he ſhould ſay, That in this he ſuppoſes nothing more inconceivable than what the Religious Man ſuppoſes, when he aſcribes to GOD Effects that have no Kind of Similitude to Him: And ſuch confeſſedly are all Material Effects, that 'tis as hard to conceive that Matter ſhould be derived from Thought, as

that

that Thought ſhould be wrought out of Matter. But the Anſwer to this will be eaſy; for the Religious Man does not ſuppoſe Material Effects to have flowed from GOD as from an emanative Cauſe, but to have been brought by Him into Being from Nothing; and therefore is not obliged to look out for any Reſemblance between the Cauſe and the Effect; whereas the *Atheiſt*, rejecting all creative Power, muſt look out for ſuch a Cauſe of the Exiſtence of Beings as may have ſome Kind of Reſemblance with the Effects depending upon it. Otherwiſe he muſt introduce Beings into the World without a ſufficient Reaſon for their Exiſtence.

HE will perhaps ſay, That Colours, Sounds and Taſtes, are produced by Matter and Motion, and yet that there is as little Reſemblance between theſe Qualities and the Figure of Bodies, as there is between Thought and Figure. And this would be a juſt Objection, if Matter and Motion did really produce Colours and Sounds; but theſe are in

the Bodies themſelves nothing more than different Degrees of Motion a-riſing from the different Contexture of thoſe Bodies. Whatever goes be-yond this, has no real Exiſtence in the Bodies; but is only a Cloathing which the Mind puts upon theſe Motions, which Motions are nothing more than an occaſional Cauſe of the Mind's re-ceiving ſuch or ſuch Ideas.

HAVING now ſhewn from the Ideas we have of Matter and Thought, that there is no Poſſibility of drawing Thought out of Matter. I will now proceed to ſhew, That the Unity and Simplicity of Thought, and the Continuance of one and the ſame Thinking Being for many Years together, which we muſt all of us con-feſs to be true, can never be reconciled either with the Compound Nature of Matter, or with the continual Changes to which all Material Compoſitions are ſubject: I ſay therefore,

2dly, THAT Unity of Thought, by which we find all our Senſations united in one Thinking Being, could never a-ri

riſe from any Compound Subſtance, ſuch as Matter, and every Conſtruction of Matter is known to be; and therefore tho' we did not know all that we could wiſh for concerning the Nature and Subject of Cogitation; yet ſo long as we may know that a ſingle Principle, ſuch as that of Thought is, cannot be an Effect or Reſult from the Action of any Compound Being, we may venture with all our Ignorance of the Nature of the Soul to affirm, That human Thought was not cauſed either by Extenſion or by the Figure of an human Body.

'Tis evident that Man is one, not many Thinking Beings; that amidſt all his various Senſations and Perceptions, there is ſome one ſingle Principle that is the Subject of all of them; 'tis plain too, that there is ſomething in Man, which thinks and contrives for the Benefit of his whole Syſtem; from whence nothing can be more evident than that there muſt be a Principle of Individuation, whatever it be, that joyns certain Parts of the human Fa-

brick together, and which thinks and acts conſonantly for the Uſe and Purpoſe of thoſe Parts: That there muſt be ſomething in our Compoſition like to what I have already deſcribed, cannot be deny'd by any Body. The only Enquiry that wants to be made, is, Whether Matter in any Shape is capable of acting as a Principle of Individuation? And we are ſure that 'tis utterly incapable for any ſuch Employment; becauſe which ever Atheiſtick Scheme we take, the Principle of Conſciouſneſs would be a Compound Being. For, to begin with *Spinoſa*'s Scheme, which makes every Particle of Matter to be Cogitative, 'tis plain there muſt be as many Thinking Beings in Man as there are Particles in an human Body, unleſs the *Spinoſiſt* would attempt to ſhew us a Way by which an infinite Number of conſcious Parts of Matter may be melted down into one conſcious Part. For notwithſtanding the Union of Parts in a Compound, the Parts ſtill remain as different from each other as ever, and therefore there muſt be good Reaſon

for

for believing that the Thoughts of those Parts of Matter could be no more united than the Parts themselves. And as to the Government of the human Fabrick, it would be necessary for the *Spinosist* to shew how all the Atoms of an human Body were persuaded to chuse one Atom, and invest it with a Power of Acting for the whole, and what it is that hinders them from recalling their Grant, and acting separately? Till these Questions are answered, *Spinosa* will appear to have built a single Thinking Principle upon a very precarious Foundation. As he has never thought fit to give us any Satisfaction in these Inquiries, his Scheme must deservedly pass for a groundless and silly Account of Things in this Particular.

THE other Scheme, which would derive Thought from some particular Organization of the Parts of Matter, is liable to the same Inconvenience. For every Organization of Matter, being a Composition of Matter, will for that Reason be unable to

furniſh us with a ſingle Conſcious Being. *Tully* ſuppoſes them to be mere Blockheads that have advanced a Compounded Being into a Principle of human Thought. *In animi Cognitione dubitare non poſſumus, niſi plane in Phyſicis plumbei ſumus, quin nihil ſit animis admixtum, nihil concretum, nihil copulatum, nihil duplex. Tuſcul. Quæſt.* And the Reaſon is plain; becauſe if the Principle of Thinking was a Being compounded of Parts, all thoſe Parts, as I have already obſerved, being the Subject of Thinking, would conſtitute as many Conſcious Beings as there are Parts that conſtitute the Thinking Principle. For the Union of Parts in a Compound, is not an Union cloſe enough to produce Unity of Thought; this will neceſſarily require the ſtricteſt of all Unions, *viz.* that by which Beings are united into a Sameneſs or Identity. Any Unity leſs than this, would never make a Man feel as he does, that all his Perceptions have a Relation to one and the ſame Thinking Being.

THAT ſuch an Union as that of Identity, is neceſſary to account for Unity of Thought, is evident from this Conſideration, That without ſuch an Unity in the Principle of Thinking, we could never, for Inſtance, ſee the whole of any Object whatſoever; becauſe if the Soul was a Being compounded of many Parts, every Part would only receive a Part of the Image of an Object, and no Part would receive the Whole, and conſequently a Man could have no Image of the Whole of an Object, unleſs the Parts of the Soul could communicate to each other their Part of the Image. But there is no Ground for ſuch a Suppoſition; becauſe 'tis certain, that when any ſolid Body is put into Motion, every Part of the Body retains a certain Degree of Motion in Proportion to its Bulk, without communicating *that* Degree of Motion to any of the other Parts of the ſame Body. The *Atheiſt*, who owns the Relation between Thought and Motion, cannot except againſt this Argument, nor ſhew any Reaſon why one Part of

Matter

Matter ſhould communicate to another Part its Share of Thought, when there are no ſuch Communications of Motion from the Parts of Body to each other. But ſuppoſing it poſſible that the whole Image of an Object might be impreſs'd upon every one of thoſe Parts that are the Subject of Thinking, there would be this Inconvenience attending ſuch a Suppoſition; that we muſt admit an Abſurdity, and ſomething harder to conceive than the Doctrine of the Schoolmen, which the *Atheiſt* is wont to laugh at, *viz.* That the Soul or perceptive Faculty would be then *tota in toto, & tota in ſingulis partibus.* For in this Caſe there would be a double Image of every Object; for every Atom that conſtitutes the Subject of Thinking, would have the whole Image of the Object, and all the Atoms taken together, would have the ſame whole Image too; which is plainly ſuperfluous or needleſs, as well as 'tis inconceiveable. If the *Atheiſt* looks upon this as Nonſenſe in a Schoolman, when 'tis applied to an Immaterial

Immaterial Soul, he ought to give a Reaſon why it ſhould not paſs for ſuch in him, when he applies it to a Material one. He ought to ſhew, That a Repreſentation of Objects twice over, is impertinent in the one Caſe, but not ſo in the other; that the one is conceivable in a diviſible Subject, but not ſo in an indiviſible one, which an immaterial Soul is ſuppoſed to be. When he has done this, we will acknowledge that a Compound Being, ſuch as Matter is, may be, for all that we have ſaid to the contrary, the true Principle of Thought.

BEFORE I leave the *Atheiſt*, I cannot but obſerve his unfair Dealing, when he pretends the Difficulty of conceiving ſome Powers aſcribed to GOD, as a Reaſon for his rejecting Religion, and yet at the ſame time ſubmitting quietly to the Drudgery of believing ſome of the moſt incredible Things in the World. This Particular of Intelligence will furniſh me with a plain Inſtance of it, if we do but take Notice of his Method of extracting it

out

out of Matter. He desires only Motion and a little Curiosity in the Composition of Matter, and then he has gotten Intelligence, tho' he knows Motion, before it came into such a Composition as that of an human Body, had no Sense at all; He knows too, that every Configuration of Matter without Motion is as senseless as any Thing that is most so; and this Man so hard to believe any thing of Religion, can believe that a Composition of Matter and Motion shall be Thought and good Sense, tho' separately there is not a Grain of Sense in either of them. He can believe one Sort of Figure to be nothing more than a Termination of Extension, but another Figure besides this shall be an Act of Sensation, by which it perceives its own Existence, and that of the Figures that surround it; that if Matter happens to fall into the Shape of Nerves and Bones, then Thought shall immediately start out of them; but if you mix up Matter in any other Shape, 'twill be nothing but senseless Matter,

and

and not a ſingle Thought to be got out of her. He can believe one Sort of Motion to be nothing but bare Change of Situation, when another Sort of Motion ſhall be, beſides this, an Act of Joy or Grief, of Hope or Truſt in GOD. He would be thought to be more nice and ſcrupulous in Examining into the Bottom of every Queſtion than other People; and 'tis for this Reaſon he cannot go ſuch Lengths in believing as the Religious Man. And yet this very Cautious Perſon can eaſily ſee that a Being made up of infinite Parts, may be the Cauſe of the moſt ſimple Thing in Nature, *viz.* Perſonality; That the Union of the Parts of Matter, is the ſame Sort of Union as that by which all our Senſations are united into one Thinking Perſon. He can believe as we have juſt now ſeen, that a Material, Diviſible Soul may be *tota in toto, & tota in ſingulis partibus*; and yet can ſee nothing but unintelligible Jargon in it, if a Schoolman offers to apply it to a Soul that is not Material or Diviſible into Parts. But I am perſuaded theſe will

will appear to be Articles of Belief of ſo hard a Digeſtion, that the *Atheiſt* muſt not pretend to defend his Infidelity by objecting Difficulties in Religious Belief.

Now to the King Eternal, Immortal, Inviſible, the Onely Wiſe GOD, *be all Honour and Glory for ever and ever.* Amen.

SERMON IX.

Acts XVII. 28.

For in Him we live, and move, and have our Being.

IN the precedent Diſcourſe I have ſhewed, That the Unity of Thought by which all our Senſations are united into one Thinking Being, and by which we are conſcious to ourſelves that we are not many, but one Thinking Being, could never be reconciled with the Compound and Diviſible

Diviſible Nature of Matter; and therefore not with any Conſtruction of Matter whatſoever.

I COME now to offer another Argument, why Thought cannot be an Effect of any Compoſition of Matter. Becauſe we ſee the Conſciouſneſs of being the ſame Thinking Being, not only continued with all the particular Senſations of the Body, but even carried thro' all the Changes of Figure or Organization, that muſt happen to the Body, in the different Stages of a Man's Life. The Man ſhall be conſcious to himſelf that he is the ſame Thinking Being, for Inſtance, at this preſent, that he was Forty Years ago; or as far as his Memory will carry him backwards to any diſtant Part of his Life already paſs'd. Thoſe who place Thinking in every Particle of Matter, cannot tell how 'tis poſſible to continue the *ſame* Thinking Being for even Twenty Years together, in which Time and much leſs, any *Anatomiſt* can tell us there will be a Sett of Atoms wholly new, and not one of the old ones left; and yet the

Man

Man is fully perſuaded that he is ſtill the *ſame* Thinking Being he was, and not *another*; acts accordingly, blames or commends himſelf for what he did ſome Years ago, as much as he does for his preſent Actions. The *Atheiſt* of this Kind will be obliged to ſhew how the ſame Conſciouſneſs can be preſerved in a total Change of the Subject of Thinking, when *that* is wholly ſpent, and not one Particle of it left. Any one but himſelf would from hence conclude, that the Subject of Thought muſt be ſome Permanent Being, and therefore not Matter or Body, which are always changing and ſhifting the Scene.

If it be ſaid, That Conſciouſneſs of being the ſame Perſon, depends upon our Memory, aud that our Memory may deceive us, that we may imagine that we have thought, and conſidered thus or thus, but we may be miſtaken; we might be conſcious of that as a Truth, which was perhaps no more than a Dream; and we may be conſcious too of that as a paſs'd Dream,

which was perhaps never ſo much as dream'd of. Suppoſing all this to be true, that we are not really the ſame Thinking Being that we were ſome Years ago, but only think that we are ſuch; yet the *Atheiſt* would be obliged to ſhew ſome probable Reaſon of a Man's thinking himſelf to be the ſame Perſon, when he is not ſuch. And this I believe would prove as great a Difficulty as the other; for when the Subject of Thought is wholly changed (as we ſuppoſe) and a new one ſucceeds, there can be no more Reaſon for a Man's being conſcious of what was done by his former ſelf, than there would be for his being conſcious of what was done by any other Perſon in the World. His preſent Self would have no more Relation or Acquaintance with his former one, than it would have with the moſt diſtant Man upon Earth, of whoſe Thoughts he neither knows nor pretends to know any Thing.

AND as to the ſecond Account of ſolving human Thought by the peculiar Organization

Organization of an human Body, this will as little account for the Sameneſs of Perſon in the different Stages of Life as the former; for thoſe who make Thought to depend upon the particular Arrangement of the Parts, muſt allow, that the Difference in a Man's Opinions, in his Inclinations and Paſſions, will depend upon the Difference of Organization; and yet a Man when he has changed his Opinions and Thoughts of Things, and has quite different Inclinations from what he had before, is yet fully perſuaded that he is ſtill one and the ſame Perſon with him who held thoſe different Opinions, with him who had Inclinations different from his preſent ones. The Objects that move the Paſſions and Inclinations of Children, are uſually very different from the Objects tha tdelight the ſame Child when grown up into a Man; and yet the Child and the Man, for all this Difference, are united into the ſelf-ſame Perſon; if we ſhould compare a Man of the greateſt natural Abilities that ever was, ſup-

poſe *Cæſar* with *himſelf* when Five Years old (for ſo far backwards a Man's Memory may poſſibly carry him into the Childiſh Part of his Life, and we have already ſeen that the Conſciouſneſs of being the ſame Perſon, reaches as far as the Memory can acquaint us with what was done by ourſelves) I ſay, if we ſhould compare the Man *Cæſar* with himſelf at Five Years of Age, there would be as much Difference between the Spirit and Underſtanding, the Paſſions and Affections of the Boy and the Man, as there would be between *Cæſar* the Man and another Man: And yet the Boy and the Man, with all their different Sentiments are acknowledged to have been the ſame Perſon. But this would be impoſſible, if Organization was the Subject of Perſonality, becauſe then every Change in the Organization, muſt of Neceſſity produce a Change of Perſon; for I will defy any Man to conceive it poſſible, that the Subject of Perſonality ſhall be changed, and yet the Perſon continue the ſame. There being no poſſible Reaſon to be given,

given, why Two Men, conſidered as Perſons, ſhould be really different from each other, but becauſe the Subject of Perſonality is not the ſame in both of them: Which ſhews to a Demonſtration that the Subject of Thought in Men, muſt be ſomething that is Steddy and Permanent, not any Compoſition of Matter which is perpetually changing.

ACCORDING to the Religious Man's Scheme of Things, this Diverſity of Opinions and Practices in the different Parts of Life, is very conceivable by ſuppoſing ſome Alteration made in thoſe Organs of Senſe, by the Means of which the Soul has Notice conveyed to it of what paſſes without it. This, I ſay, would be eaſy enough to conceive, were there no Difficulty in conceiving the Union of an Immaterial Being with one that is Material, no Difficulty in imagining what thoſe Bands and Ligaments ſhould be, that could faſten together a Pair that are ſo little like one another, that there is not any one Quality or Feature, any one Diſpoſition, internal or external, in which they reſemble one

another; and yet to find that whenever Body is affected by external Objects, that *Pſyche* conceives a Thought, as if Body was the *Natural Parent* of that Thought; that from the Motion or Agency of Matter in an human Body, Thought ſhould as certainly and ſteddily ariſe, as if Thought was the genuine Off-ſpring of Matter, and its Motion the real and entire Cauſe of that Effect: Theſe 'tis acknowledged are great Difficulties; and come now in Courſe to be conſidered with the ſecond Argument by which the *Atheiſt* is wont to juſtify himſelf, *viz.* "That there is as much "Difficulty in conceiving that Corpo-"real Motions ſhould conſtantly ex-"cite different Ideas by acting upon "an Immaterial Subſtance, *viz.* that "certain Motions in Objects ſhould be "the Reaſon of there being certain "Senſations in an Immaterial Being; "as that Thought ſhould ariſe from "ſome particular Situation of the Parts "of Matter." And yet we cannot allow this Difficulty to be a ſufficient Reaſon for rejecting an Immaterial Soul;

Soul; becauſe we find by Experience that there are many Difficulties in Nature, which the *Atheiſt* muſt allow as well as we. For he muſt grant Something to be Infinite, and then there muſt be ſome Effects flowing from the Action of an Infinite Power, that will not fall within the Cognizance or View of a limited Underſtanding; and therefore the faireſt Way of Determining, when there is a Neceſſityof Determining one Way or other, is to weigh the Difficulties on both Sides, and ſee which preponderates, and determine ourſelves accordingly. And then I am ſure the *Atheiſt* will gain nothing by this Objection; for if we have ſhewn it to be impoſſible that Thought ſhould be Figure or Motion, or ſhould ariſe from either ſeparately, or from both together, or that it ſhould be an eſſential Attribute of Matter, and that there is no other poſſible Way of Accounting for Intelligence, unleſs they will admit an Immaterial Soul; there can be no Reaſon for ſuſpending a Determination in ſuch a Caſe on account

of any Difficulties in conceiving the Action of Material upon Immaterial.

BUT the *Sceptick* will perhaps put the Objection in this manner; "That the "Difficulty of conceiving the Operation of Material upon Immaterial, "must be at leaſt as great as that of "conceiving Thought to ariſe from "the Action of Matter or Body; because ſuppoſing the laſt to be inconceivable, 'tis no more ſo than the "former, which no Body pretends to "underſtand; and if the Inconceivableneſs of it be no Reaſon for rejecting "the Action of Material upon Immaterial, neither ought the Inconceivableneſs of Thought's ariſing from "Matter, be a Reaſon for our rejecting "a Material Soul; becauſe Matter being Infinite, many Effects may ariſe "from it that a Finite Being cannot conceive; and then, Why not "Thought? If we think ourſelves ſure "that Thought is not Figure and "Motion; we may be as ſure that "Matter can have nothing to do "with

" with what is not Matter. Conſequently " the Difficulties being equal, the *Scep-* " *tick* will ſay, there can be no ſuffi- " cient Reaſon for determining this " Queſtion either Way. "

IN Anſwer to this, 'Tis granted that we can no more conceive the Action of Material upon Immaterial, than the producing Thought from Figure and Motion, that is, we can conceive neither of them; ſo far then they ſhall be equal. But this is not all, we aſſert not only that we cannot conceive the Production of Thought from Figure and Motion, but alſo that we are ſure 'tis impoſſible it ſhould be produced merely from Figure and Motion; and this we are perſuaded of, not becauſe ſuch a Thing is out of the Limits of our Conceptions, which the *Sceptick*'s Objection drawn from the Infinity of Matter ſuppoſes; but becauſe we ſee in ſuch an Aſſertion a manifeſt Repugnance or Contradiction to our Conceptions, as I have already ſhewn *.

But

* See Sermon VIII.

But I will defy the *Sceptick* to ſhew ſuch a Repugnance in the Action of Material upon Immaterial; for ſince we have proved *, That the Principle of Motion cannot be a Material Being, thence it muſt follow, that an Immaterial Being does, and muſt act upon a Material one. And if Immaterial may act upon Material, I am ſure it can never be proved impoſſible, that Matter ſhould act upon that which is not Matter. For it can't be denied, that we may as eaſily conceive Matter to act upon *that* which is *not* Matter, as that what is *not* Matter ſhould act upon Matter: We can as eaſily conceive that Thought ſhould be a Conſequence of the Motion of Body upon an Immaterial Soul, as that Motion in Body ſhould be a Conſequence of *Volition*, which is the *ſuppoſed* Action of an Immaterial Being upon a Material one. This being plain, a fair Examiner would conclude, tho' he does not underſtand how 'tis, that the Action of Matter or Body upon the Soul

* See Sermon VI.

Soul depended upon the arbitrary Diſpoſition of that GOD, who tho' Immaterial Himſelf, does move Matter, and was therefore able to unite Material and Immaterial in ſuch a Manner, that the Motions of the former ſhould affect the latter; and not, as the *Atheiſt* pretends, that ſuch a Difficulty as this hinders him from ſeeing that ſome Simple Being, (exempt from thoſe Changes which Matter, and every Organization of Matter is ſubject to) is the Cauſe of Perſonality, or the Sameneſs of a Thinking Being. We have then gained the Exiſtence of ſomething in Man that is not Material, *viz.* an Immaterial Soul.

FROM whence we may obſerve, That the *Atheiſt* is deprived of the principal Advantage he propoſed to himſelf in quitting Religion. We are told by the *Epicureans*, That the chief Aim they had in quitting Religion, was to free themſelves from any Solicitude and anxious Fears concerning a future State, as appears by *Virgil* and *Lucretius*.

tius * When our modern *Freethinker* quotes with Pleaſure theſe or ſuch-like Paſſages, we may fairly believe him to be ſwayed by the ſame Motive; but 'tis evident he can never free himſelf upon any rational Grounds from ſuch Fears. For if the Principle of Thinking cannot be a Being of a Compound Nature, he ought to tell us, and ſatisfy himſelf if he can, what can alter ſuch a Being, and make it leave off Thinking as ſoon as his Corporeal Structure becomes unfit for continuing any longer the Vital Functions. We can eaſily conceive that the Union of the Parts of a Compound Being, ſuch as an human Body, may be broken; the Parts disband and take different Routs, and afterwards appear in another Form, by

* Felix qui potuit rerum cognoſcere cauſas,
Atque metus omnes & inexorabile fatum
Subjecit pedibus, ſtrepitumque Acherontis avari.
Virgil. Georg. Lib. 2. v. 490.
Et metus ille foras præceps Acherontis agendus
Funditus, humanam qui turbat Vitam.
Lucret. Lib. 3.

by joyning together in a different manner, and compoſing ſome new Syſtem with different Qualities: Becauſe ſuch Parts, notwithſtanding their Union, are really different from each other, and therefore will be capable of exiſting apart from each other; whereas there is no conceiving any real Difference in a ſimple Subſtance: Therefore as ſuch it muſt be incapable of putting on another Form, or being diveſted of any Qualities that 'tis naturally poſſeſs'd of, and then the Diſſolution of the Parts of an human Body will never infer a Total Ceſſation of Thought in ſuch a Being as Man.

IF it be ſaid that ſince a Defect in certain Organs of the Body ſhall cauſe a Diſorder and a Diſtemper in our Thinking Faculty, why ſhould not a Total Deſtruction of all the Organs bring on the Death of the Thinking Being, or a Total Ceſſation of its Thinking; or if an Original or Accidental Fault in any one of the Inſtruments of Senſe, ſuch as thoſe of ſeeing and hearing, ſhall make us incapable

ble of having any Thoughts concerning Colours and Sounds, or make us incapable of receiving any further Notices concerning the visible or audible Qualities of Bodies; therefore why should not the entire Destruction of all the Organs of Sense put a final End to all our Thoughts: It will be a sufficient Answer to this Objection, if we say that the Dependence which the Principle of Thought has upon the Body in its Operations of thinking while 'tis united to it, can never be so good a Proof of its totally ceasing with the Body, as the Simplicity of the thinking Principle will be to prove that it has no separable Parts, by whose Separation from each other, the whole might be supposed (as in Compound Beings) to exchange its thinking Quality for another that was not such. And therefore the Dissolution of a Compound Being, such as an Human Body, can never give the *Atheist* any reasonable Grounds for believing the Extinction of a Simple Being, such as the Principle of Thought is already proved

proved to be. And as he allows not any Annihilations of Beings, he will never be able to tell us by what Means the thinking Principle in Man ſhould loſe its Faculty of thinking. Thus then the *Atheiſt* ſeems to be entirely diſappointed, when he hopes by throwing off Religion to get quit of the Fears of an After-ſtate.

2*dly*, GRANTING the *Spinoſiſt* for once that the Conſciouſneſs of a Man's being the ſame Perſon or thinking Being in all the different Parts of his Life, may be reconciled with the Flux Nature of Body, with the continual Changes of its Materials; giving him even this I ſay to make the beſt he can of it, I am confident that upon ſecond Thoughts he would not thank me for this Conceſſion: For he will then be as little able to ſecure himſelf againſt the Fears of Evil in an after-State as he would be by believing a GOD; becauſe there will be no deſtroying Thought even in this Caſe by deſtroying the Body. For ſuppoſing Thought to be Extenſion, then

then the Diſſolution of the Body at Death could by no Means put an End to its thinking, any more than it could to its Extenſion: And notwithſtanding the Separation of the Parts of an human Body when 'tis corrupted, yet all the Particles ſtill continue to be extended Subſtances, and therefore thinking Subſtances, if Thought be Extenſion, and Extenſion Thought. And then ſuch thinking Subſtances, may be obnoxious to as great or greater Evils and Miſeries in another State than they are in this. For when the Corporeal Particles that compoſe our *Atheiſt* are ſeparated at his Death, they muſt ſtill retain a Senſe of Pleaſure and Pain, or be capable of receiving either, if every Atom of Matter be thoughtful; and he cannot be ſo weak as to think that no other Atoms, but thoſe that form the Thoughts of a Man, can be malicious, and do him a Miſchief. And then there may be many Thinking Subſtances in the Air and elſewhere, that may be as well qualified to do him a Miſ-

chief

chief in the future State, as the Atoms that compoſe the Thoughts of Men are in this preſent One.

IF he ſays that the Thinking Atoms, of which his dead Carcaſs will conſiſt, can have no more relation to him than the Atoms of any other dead Body, and therefore that he ſhall not be affected by any Sufferings of theirs; I would then ask him the Reaſons he has for believing ſo, ſo long, I mean, as he believes that the ſame Conſcious Being ſhall continue in a Man for Seven, or twice Seven Years; and yet every Body knows, that in ſuch a Diſtance of Time, there is not perhaps a ſingle Atom left of the old ones. If after all theſe Changes the Man ſtill feels to his Grief, that he is the ſame Man now in a Fit of the Gout, ſuppoſe, that he was Ten Years paſt in a Fever; what Security can the *Atheiſt* have that Death will put an End to his Troubles? Why not rather fear, that his dead Body may enter into the Compoſition of ſome other Syſtem of Thinking Matter; and he become as ſenſible of the Good or Evil

that ſhall befal ſuch a Syſtem, as he is of what befals his preſent Frame? I muſt affirm this to be as conceivable, as that every Atom in a Man's Body ſhould be changed, and yet the ſame Perſon or Thinking Being continue; ſuppoſing the *Atheiſt*'s Scheme a true one, *viz.* That human Thought hath no other Cauſe of its *Being*, beſides the perpetual Changes in the Particles that compoſe an human Body. Thus we ſee that giving the *Spinoſiſt* what he contends for, he is yet as far as ever from gaining what he chiefly aimed at, and which he could not hope for in Religion, *viz.* Reſt and Impunity after he is dead.

BUT perhaps the other Account of Thought, which places it in a particular Organization, may be eſpouſed by ſome Perſons as a better Security againſt the Apprehenſions of Evil in another World; as they think the Deſtruction of that particular Organization muſt carry with it a total Extinction of Thought, and conſequently of Conſciouſneſs. Becauſe if the Soul be nothing more

more than what *Dicearchus* believed it, *viz.* A Body consisting of Parts of such a particular Figure as is necessary to Life *, when the Body loses that Figure which is necessary to its Life, the Power of Thinking must be entirely lost with it. But even here, safe as the *Atheist* thinks himself, while he endeavours to avoid the Immortality of Thought by denying that it is an essential Attribute of Body, is not so near a total Cessation of Thought as he hopes for. For he must allow Thought to be one of the Modifications which Body is capable of receiving; and then he must acknowledge, that there is no destroying any Mode, without producing another of the same Kind; because it fares thus with all the Modes of Body with which we are acquainted; for the Corruption of one Mode is always the Generation of another of

* Nec quidquam nisi corpus ita figuratum, ut temperatione Naturæ vigeat & sentiat. Vid. Cicero Tuscul. Quæst.

the ſame Sort; as we ſee the diſcharg-ing of one Colour, is an introduction to another; the loſs of one Figure the gain of another. If it be ſaid, That Motion is a Mode, and may be totally extinguiſhed, and therefore why not Thought? I anſwer, That Motion is not a Mode which depends upon Body or any Attribute of Body for its Production, but upon a Cauſe wholly different from and foreign to it, as I have already ſhewn *; whereas Thought is ſuppoſed by the *Atheiſt* to be entirely derived from the Body, and therefore muſt either depend upon ſome Attribute of Body, or proceed from nothing. But of all ſuch Modes as are founded upon the eſſential Attributes of any Subſtance, and derive their Modality from thence, it will be always moſt true to affirm, that you only Change one Mode for another of the ſame Sort, but no more deſtroy them all, than you can deſtroy the eſſential Attributes from whence they flow. And therefore tho' that

* See Sermon VI.

that particular Way or Mode of Thinking which belongs to the human Fabrick may ceaſe, yet we can ſee no Reaſon why all Sort of Thinking ſhould be extinguiſhed with it, any more than why the Extinction of one particular Figure in Body ſhould draw after it the Deſtruction of all Figure, which we know to be impoſſible without an utter Annihilation of the Body. This Reaſoning would equally hold tho' Thought was not a Mode of Extenſion, but of ſome unknown Attribute of Matter, becauſe it would be no more poſſible to deſtroy a Mode of that unknown Attribute without generating another, than it would be in the Caſe of Extenſion.

BUT then the *Atheiſt* will ſay, That a different Mode will have no concern with him, and he cannot be affected by any Sentiments of Pain that his Body may be affected with in another State. I will allow him to be as poſitive in this as he pleaſes, when he is able to tell me (I mean upon any Foot of *Atheiſm*) what 'tis makes him to be

the ſame Perſon at this Time, when he believes Matter or the World to be the ſupreme and onely Being, with that ſelf who perhaps formerly believed, as we do, an Intelligent Being that created the World. What it is that makes him believe himſelf as much concerned in the Pleaſure and Pains of the former Parts of his Life, as in thoſe of the preſent Time, tho' many conſiderable Alterations may have happened in his internal and external Fabrick. When he can reconcile this Sameneſs of Perſon with all the Changes that his Body has undergone in a Courſe of many Years, it will be then time to grant, that the Thoughts of the dead Perſon may have no Concern with thoſe of the living one. Till then, the *Atheiſt* by this Scheme, no more than the *Spinoſiſt*, will be able by any fair Deductions from his own Principles to ſecure himſelf againſt the Fears of Evil in a future State, ſince we have already ſeen he cannot prove a total Ceſſation of Thought after Death, nor tell us what Change of Organization will certainiy deſtroy Conſciouſneſs

ſciouſneſs. Or that ſuch a Change as that at our Deaths, muſt neceſſarily do it, ſo long as he allows Conſciouſneſs to keep pace with all the Changes that happen to a Man in a long extended Life.

THUS then the *Atheiſt* muſt be a moſt unhappy Creature, when he cannot live without GOD in *this* World, but he muſt be without *Hopes* too of being at Reſt when he is *out* of it,

SERMON X.

ROMANS I. 22.

Professing themselves to be Wise, they became Fools.

THESE Words were designed by St. *Paul* against those who frequented the Schools of the Philosophers, and yet did not leave off the Assemblies of the Heathen Temples, where GOD was worshipped in an Image or Similitude of a Man, or what was more unworthy of Himself, a Bird or Beast, or even a Reptile or creeping Thing, as we

we find by the 23d Verſe. No doubt theſe Men richly deſerved this Cenſure of St. *Paul*'s, *viz.* That notwithſtanding all the Learning of the Schools, their Conduct ſhewed them to be as ignorant of the Nature of GOD as any of the meaneſt of the Vulgar, whilſt they joyned with them in paying Honour to ſuch ridiculous Repreſentations of the DEITY. And yet I cannot help believing that the School of *Epicurus* in St. *Paul*'s Days, and their Succeſſors the *Spinoſiſts* in ours, have a much better Title to this Cenſure of our Apoſtle, than any other Sect or Sort of Men that either now are, or ever were in the World; and that they have not ſhewn ſtronger Marks of Ignorance and Folly in any one Point of their *Philoſophy*, than when they endeavour to account for the curious Contrivance of this World, without the Help of a Contriving Agent.

THE *Atheiſt*'s Way of Rearing up the World is thus: He ſuppoſes the whole Material World, ſuch as we find

find it, to be the onely God or Neceſſarily-exiſtent Being; that the whole Frame of Things, the Heavens, the Earth, and the regular Order in which they appear to us, proceeded as an Effect from the unguided, but neceſſary Laws of Motion from Eternity: That the ſeveral Species of Animals, as well as the Inanimate Parts of the World, and even Rational Beings, ſuch as Men, did all ſpring up from theſe unguided Motions.

THE *Alchymiſts* with their Philoſopher's Stone, may paſs for ſober and ſerious Perſons when compared with theſe Men; for they pretended only to the Secret of moving Matter in ſuch a Manner as to tranſmute it into Gold; but theſe People pretend to give us a World full of Contrivance and Curioſity merely by the Help of Motion, tho' there ſhall be no Body to direct that Motion. For tho' *Spinoſa* ſuppoſed his Matter to be furniſhed with Underſtanding, yet he did not allow it to make any Uſe of its Underſtanding in directing any of its Motions; for theſe

are

are ſuppoſed by him to be the Neceſſary Laws of Matter in Motion: Whereas the *Chymiſt*'s Matter that was to make Gold was managed by an Intelligent Agent, and 'tis poſſible to ſuppoſe a proper Motion among the ſeveral Degrees of Motion might be given it, but the *Atheiſt* has left his Matter to ſhift for itſelf, he allows it may be ſtirred, tho' he cannot tell by what, or by whom, as we have already ſeen *; but however, he will have no Senſe or Wiſdom to ſtand by, either to diſtribute proper Quantities of Motion, or to direct the Line they were to deſcribe; and yet he is confident that this regular and orderly Frame of Things ſhall ariſe from ſuch undirected Motions, *an admirable Conceit!* as the Author of the *Characteriſticks* ſays, *believe it who can.*

AND yet this Man pretends to be ſhocked at Difficulties in religious Belief, at the ſame time as he ſees no Difficulty in Rearing up this World without any Aſſiſtance. The greater the

* See Serm. VI.

the Undertaking, the greater, I ſuppoſe, is the Share of Credit he propoſes to himſelf; but ſure I am, his Share of Credit will dwindle into that of the Wiſe Men in my *Text*, who *profeſſing themſelves wiſe, became Fools.* For none but a Fool would offer to confound the Differences between Wiſdom and Folly, Senſe and no Senſe, Contrivance and Chance, or uncontriving Neceſſity. For if unguided Motions ſhall execute as regular a Piece of Work, and as well fitted for anſwering any Ends or Purpoſes, as thoſe that are directed by the beſt Senſe, we have then nothing left us whereby to judge what makes the Difference between good Senſe and no Senſe, between Wiſdom and Folly. If it were poſſible for us to be miſtaken in the Nature of Thought and Motion; yet as the *Atheiſt* will not ſay, that all Motions are wiſe, and directed by good Senſe, we will ask him, how he diſtinguiſhes thoſe that are ſuch, from others? If he judges by their Effects, ſo may we too; and I would willingly ask him, Whether he can

give

give us any better *Criteria* to help us in diſtinguiſhing them, than theſe? That ſuch Works are an Effect of Motions guided by Underſtanding, as diſcover a Regularity in them, and a Propriety or Fitneſs to anſwer ſome End or Purpoſe; eſpecially if we ſee a great Diverſity in thoſe Works, and yet much Curioſity in them; in theſe Caſes we are apt to judge them to belong to ſome Maſterly Hand. Theſe are our Ways of Judging, when we determine whether any Thing is a Work of Art contrived by ſuch Intelligent Beings as we confeſſedly are; or whether 'tis only a Quantity of Matter heaped up without any kind of Order, and unfit to anſwer any particular Purpoſe. Theſe are the Rules by which we are willing to try the Works of Nature, and the *Atheiſt* muſt be contented with them, unleſs he will give us a Reaſon, Why in a Work of Art theſe ſhall be Indications of Thought and Contrivance, and none in a Work of Nature?

ALL that the *Atheiſt* ſays, comes to this, "That the Greateſt and Beſt of

"all

"all Beings, in the Religious Man's "Opinion, is no Effect of Wiſdom or "Contrivance; and therefore why muſt "the World, which he believes the "greateſt and beſt of all Beings, be "an Effect of any Thought or Deſign; "altho' particular Works do ariſe from "the Agency of ſome Thinking Be-"ings. That the Religious Man be-"lieves GOD to be the moſt Accom-"pliſhed BEING, and yet that He "owes not his Accompliſhments to "any Wiſdom or Contrivance, but is "Neceſſarily what He is; and there-"fore, Why may not the Curioſity "in the Works of Nature be an Ef-"fect of Neceſſity, tho' leſs perfect "Works, ſuch as thoſe of Art, be an "Effect of Thought and Counſel."

LET us ſee then, whether the Evidence for the Frame of the World's proceeding from Neceſſity, be ſufficient to out-weigh the Evidence for its being the Contrivance of ſome Intelligent Being. And ſince the only Argument he brings againſt the Appearances of Thought and Intelligence in the Works of

of Nature, is, that the Frame of the World *may* be the Neceſſarily-exiſtent Being: If I can ſhew, That there is no Ground for ſuch a Suppoſition, that the Appearances of Nature do argue the Cauſe of them to have acted arbitrarily, and diſpoſed of Matter with the utmoſt Freedom, it muſt then follow, that if there be any Thing like Wiſdom or Contrivance in the Fabrick of the World, theſe, and not Neceſſity, are the true Cauſes of it. I will therefore ſhew,

1*ſt*, THAT the Frame of the World cannot have its Exiſtence from Neceſſity.

2*dly*, THAT there are plain Signatures of Wiſdom and good Senſe in thoſe Parts of the World with which we are beſt acquainted; and therefore that it muſt have been the Effect of ſome Wiſe and Intelligent Being.

1*ſt*, THAT the Frame of the World cannot have its Exiſtence from a Neceſſity of Nature, and that for theſe two Reaſons.

1*ſt*, BECAUSE

1*ſt*, BECAUSE no Compound Being (ſuch as the World is) can have Neceſſary Exiſtence.

2*dly*, BECAUSE there are evident Marks of a free and arbitrary Diſpoſal in its Conſtitution: Such an arbitrary Diſpoſal, I mean, as is conſiſtent with good Senſe.

1*ſt*, BECAUSE no Compound Being (ſuch as the World is) can have Neceſſary Exiſtence.

THE *Atheiſt*'s Argument, That as GOD is ſuppoſed by the Religious Man to be the moſt Accompliſhed of all Beings in Point of Wiſdom, and yet to be no Effect of Wiſdom, that therefore there may be great Appearances of Wiſdom without any original Cauſe of that Wiſdom, will amount to no more than this; That there muſt be Something Wiſe and Intelligent from the Neceſſity of its own Nature, or without any Original Cauſe of its Wiſdom. 'Tis agreed, That there muſt be ſuch a Being, otherwiſe there could be no ſuch Thing as Wiſdom; but the Queſtion between us and the *Atheiſt* is,

What Sort of Being this muſt be; and whether Matter in its various Compoſitions, ſuch as the Frame of the Univerſe is made up of, can be that Wiſe and Intelligent Being? and, Whether it could look ſo much like a Production of Wiſdom and Contrivance as it does, if it were the real Parent of Wiſdom, and owed that Wiſdom to nothing but the Neceſſity of its own Nature? The BEING that the Religious Man ſuppoſes to be Neceſſarily-exiſtent, is a moſt Simple BEING, and whoſe Nature is for that Reaſon not ſubject to Change or Alteration. The *Atheiſt*'s Neceſſarily-exiſtent Being, is a Compound one, a Being capable of receiving all manner of Changes, ſuch as Matter and all its Compoſitions are; for *Spinoſa* allows all the Modes of Being under which Matter appears (as well as the Subſtance of Matter abſtracted from any particular Mode of Exiſtence) to be the Neceſſarily-exiſtent Being; and ſo muſt all who affirm the Frame of the World to be Neceſſarily-exiſtent. But the

Religious

Religious Perſon is perſuaded, that a Compound Being, or any Being that is capable of receiving different Modes of Being, can never be reconciled with the Idea of Neceſſary Exiſtence; becauſe every Compoſition in a Compound Being may be conceived by us capable of being changed into ſome other, that ſhall be entirely different from what it was. And therefore no one Compoſition can be truly and properly Neceſſary; unleſs a Poſſibility of being or not being, were conſiſtent with Neceſſity. *Spinoſa* ſaw there was no avoiding the Force of this Reaſoning, and that there was no defending Matter unleſs he could make her a Simple Being: And therefore he entirely alter'd the received Notion of its being diviſible and changeable; tho' without Reaſon, as I have already proved *; thinking it would be eaſier to perſuade the World even to alter their Notion of Matter, than to make them believe that any Compoſition of Being could

* See Sermon IV.

be a ſufficient Support for Neceſſary Exiſtence.

2*dly*, THE Frame of the World cannot be the Neceſſarily-exiſtent Being, becauſe there are evident Marks of a free and arbitrary Diſpoſal in its Conſtitution, ſuch an arbitrary Diſpoſal, I mean, as is conſiſtent with good Senſe. If there was one uniform Appearance of Bodies in the Infinite Space, if all the Compoſitions of Matter were exactly of the ſame Bulk, and did all exactly deſcribe the ſame Motions; there would be an Appearanee that would much better reſemble Neceſſity, than the preſent Face of Things; tho' even this would not prove theſe Magnitudes, and theſe Motions to be neceſſary; becauſe there might be conceived very different Combinations of Matter floating in an infinite Space, very different Lines of Motion, and yet equally uniform; therefore none of them could be abſolutely neceſſary: becauſe, as I have already proved, whatever exiſts from a Neceſſity of Nature, cannot be conceived to be any Thing but what it is.

is. But the preſent Face of Things has all imaginable Variety; inſtead of one vaſt Syſtem conſiſting of a great Number of uniform Bodies with a Sun at the Centre of it, we have probably a prodigious Number of Syſtems, as many as there are fix'd Stars, with ſuch a Star, as we have a Sun, at the Centre of each of them; and yet we can ſee nothing in the Nature of Matter that ſhould determine it into this great Diverſity of Syſtems, rather than into one. The Syſtem of which our Earth is a Part might have been different from what it is, it might have been bigger or leſs than it is, as Space is infinite, and nothing but Will and *Pleaſure* can be a Reaſon of the Dimenſions of *ours*, or of any other Syſtem. No other Reaſon can be given for the particular Number of Planets, and of their different Magnitudes in this Syſtem; nor why ſome of them have more, others fewer, *Satellites* attending upon them; and if we were as capable of Judging of any of the other Syſtems, as we are of our own, we ſhould pro-

bably find great Differences in all these Respects from ours; but to confine ourselves to our own of which we have some Knowledge, we will consider the different *Orbits* in which the Planets and Comets of our System move; the one move in *Elliptical*, the other in *Parabolical* Figures. 'Tis evident, that the moving Force, impress'd upon Bodies that describe such different *Orbits*, must be different too; and 'tis as evident that such a Diversity can have no Foundation in Necessity; but must be resolved into the free Agency of some Being who thought fit to impress a greater Quantity of Motion, or more of the Projectile Force upon some Parcels of Matter than He did upon others.

AGAIN, we must never look for a Reason in Necessity of the Earth's moving about its *Axis* in a Motion oblique to its *Equator*; because we are sure that the most simple and the most obvious Motion had been in an *Orbit* that was parallel to it; and that its Motion upon the *Ecliptick* is a Deviation from that simple Motion; and

therefore

therefore the *Atheiſt* ought to give a Reaſon why the Earth muſt needs have been of ſuch an outward Form, or have ſuch a Difference in its inward Contexture, as might be the Cauſe of the Obliquity of its Annual Motion to its Diurnal. But I am perſuaded he will never find any thing like a Reaſon for it, till, with us, he looks for it in ſome Free and Intelligent Cauſe that was pleaſed to contrive it in this Manner. I do not pretend to ſay, That any Variation from the preſent Appearance of Things, would have been for the better. But that ſuch a Suppoſition would carry with it no Repugnance to our Conceptions of Things, and that we cannot ſee any Reaſon for ſuch a Diverſity, unleſs we reſolve it into the Will and Pleaſure of ſome Being who made ſuch Diviſions of Matter, and gave them ſuch Motions, when Matter was equally ſuſceptible of any other.

I KNOW *Spinoſa* in the ſixteenth *Propoſition* of his *Poſthumous Works*, would endeavour to account for all the Di-

verſity in the World by Neceſſity, when he ſays, *Ex neceſſitate Divinæ Naturæ Infinita infinitis modis (hoc eſt, omnia quæ ſub Intellectum cadere poſſunt) ſequi debent.* That is, that all Poſſibility of Being muſt of Neceſſity flow from the Divine Nature; conſequently all that Variety of Concretions, and Diverſity of Motions, which we have inſtanced in as Arguments of Freedom, would be the Effects of Neceſſity; but let us ſee how he proves this; why, he refers us to his ſixth *Definition* in the ſame Book, in which he defines GOD to be a Being that conſiſts of an infinite Number of Attributes that are different from one another; from which Infinity of Attributes, by neceſſary Conſequence, muſt ariſe an Infinity of Things infinitely varied in the Manner of their Exiſtence. He does not tell us how a Simple Being may have many Attributes really differing from one another, nor whether theſe different Attributes are not beholden to Motion for their Exiſtence, which would be ſuppoſing Matter to have been always in Motion,

altho'

altho' we have already ſeen that *Spinoſa* would never give an Anſwer to thoſe who ask'd him, How it came into Motion *? But to let that paſs; ſuppoſing Matter to be infinitely moved, or in infinitely various Degrees, yet no one can give a Reaſon why this particular Variety of Beings ſhould be more neceſſary than any other. For if every Poſſibility of Being muſt ariſe from the Motion of Matter infinitely varied, then the preſent Frame of the World muſt contain in it all that Variety which 'tis poſſible to conceive; and yet nothing is plainer than that the Mind of Man does conceive it poſſible, that the Order of Beings might have been different from the preſent one. And yet I would not have the *Atheiſt* quit his Neceſſity to take up with Chance, as ſomething that would be better qualified to account for this Variety; becauſe Chance is a Word that ſignifies nothing but the Ignorance of him that makes Uſe of it, and can have no Signification

* See Sermon VI.

nification nor Uſe in a Philoſophical Account of Things; for if the Motions of Matter be not directed by a Free Being, they muſt be pure Mechanical Neceſſity, or neceſſary Conſequences of Matter in Motion, which leaves no Room for *Epicurus*'s Fortuitous Concourſe of Atoms.

HAVING now ſhewn, That the great Variety which appears in Nature could not proceed from Neceſſity, but muſt be the Effect of ſome BEING that acts with Freedom; it muſt be perfectly unreaſonable to Doubt whether that Agent, who freely produced this Variety, be a Wiſe and Intelligent Being, if we can obſerve as ſtrong Appearances of Thought and Contrivance in the Works of Nature, as we do in thoſe Artificial ones which do confeſſedly owe their Birth to ſome Intelligent Beings. The Rules we have of diſtinguiſhing Works of Art from thoſe which are merely the Effect of Chance or a blind Neceſſity, are theſe: That there be a Regularity in the Work, and a Fitneſs to anſwer ſome End or Purpoſe.

Purpoſe. Whenever we find theſe, we never heſitate in pronouncing them to be the Work of ſome Being that knew what he did, and why he did it. The *Atheiſt* himſelf, ſince his beloved Neceſſity will not help him out, muſt allow this to be a fair Way of proving the Wiſdom of the MAKER of the World, or elſe be ſo Ridiculous as to believe that there may be ſuch a Thing as Art without an Artificer. I ſhall therefore proceed to ſhew

2*dly*, THAT if we Judge of the World by the Rules now mentioned, we cannot avoid diſcovering many Signatures of Wiſdom and good Senſe in thoſe Parts of it with which we are beſt acquainted. I am ſenſible this Argument has been ſo often and ſo thoroughly urged againſt the *Infidel* by many of thoſe Learned Perſons who have Preached theſe Lectures, that I ſhould have entirely paſs'd it over, but that it compleats the Proof of Unreaſonableneſs upon the *Infidel*, if he defends himſelf by any Difficulties in Religious Belief; becauſe the Difficulty himſelf

himſelf lies under, will appear to be no leſs than that of Believing, that there is neither Thought nor Contrivance in a World, which every Body elſe ſees to be moſt Artificial. However, what I have to ſay upon it, ſhall be in a few Words, by offering an Inſtance or two of Regularity in the Works of Nature, and plain Indications of Thought and Deſign in adapting thoſe Works to certain Ends and Uſes.

THE firſt Inſtance I ſhall mention, is, The Annual Motion of the Earth, by Means of which every Part of the Earth receives as proper Degrees of Heat for the Plants and Animals of that Part, as if this Motion had been contrived on Purpoſe by the beſt Underſtanding. As I have already ſhewn, that the Obliquity of the Earth's Annual Motion about the Sun, to its Diurnal one about its Axis, muſt have ſome Free Agent for the Cauſe of it, it being Nonſenſe to ſay, That this particular Obliquity was neceſſary, when there are ſo many other Degrees of Obliquity beſides this particular one;

I will

I will now ſhew, That it muſt have for its Cauſe a Wiſe and Contriving BEING that ſaw the Conſequences of every other Degree of Obliquity, and pitched upon this, as what would be fitteſt for the ſeveral Animals that were to be diſperſed over the Face of the whole Earth. That ſome Degree of Obliquity would be more beneficial to the Inhabitants of this Earth in general than none, cannot be denied, without Denying that the different Seaſons of the Year are a Benefit, or that thoſe Plants and Animals that live near the *Poles* would fare as well, and receive as comfortable a Share of Heat, without a Summer as with one. For 'tis evident if its Annual Motion had been parallel with its Diurnal one, we muſt have wanted the Viciſſitudes of the Seaſons of Summer and Winter; if it had been much leſs oblique than it is, the Inhabitants near the *Poles* would have received little Benefit from the Summer; and if it had been much more oblique to the *Æquator* than it is at preſent, the Heat muſt have been much

much greater in the *Torrid Zone* than it is now. And if the Ancients thought it, such as it is, to be incapable of receiving Inhabitants by Reason of the extream Heat, they would have had much more Reason for such a Belief upon an Increase of the Obliquity of the Earth's Annual Motion. But if no Declination at all, or any other Degree of it, that should differ *much* from what we have at present, must have been worse for the Plants and Animals in general than it is; we can have no Pretence to look any where for the Cause of this exact Contrivance of the Earth's Motion, but in the Fore-thought of some Wise and Intelligent BEING. He that will do otherwise, will find himself reduced to the Necessity of Asserting, with *Lucretius*, That the Eye was not designedly contrived for admitting the Rays of Light, nor the Ear for receiving the tremulous Motions of Bodies, tho' an Organ well fitted for that Purpose, nor the Air, tho' a *Medium* well fitted, for conveying those tremulous Motions to it. And as the

modern

modern *Atheiſt* will confeſs this to be ridiculous upon the *Epicurean* Foot of Chance, ſo it will be equally ridiculous to affirm, that this particular Degree of Obliquity in the Earth's Annual Motion, (altho' there are ſo many other Degrees of Obliquity which our Earth might have been equally capable of receiving) was the Produce of a blind Neceſſity.

2*dly*, ANOTHER Inſtance I ſhall give of Fore-thought and Contrivance, is, the Natural Oeconomy of the World, by which a ſufficient Proviſion is made for that vaſt Family of Animals that dwell upon the Face of the Earth. If we had found our Globe filled with a Variety of Animals, and the Quantity of Proviſion for Food and Maintenance no ways anſwerable to ſuch a Number, or if there were Food enough, that thoſe Animals had not Skill enough to find out ſuch Food as would be proper for the Support of their Lives, we ſhould judge aright, if we concluded they came here by Chance or Neceſſity. But if we find that nothing is wanting

wanting for the Support of ſo large a Family of Creatures as there are upon our Earth, ſuch a Variety of ſeveral Sorts of Food as fully anſwers the Occaſions of ſuch different Kinds of Creatures, and that all theſe Kinds, whether living in the Air, the Water, or the Earth, have a great Sagacity in finding out each their proper Food, which is undeniably the Truth of the Matter; and was long ago taken Notice of as an Argument of Senſe and Contrivance *; we muſt confeſs, that there muſt have been ſome Underſtanding BEING that had computed what Quantity of Food would be neceſſary for their Maintenance, and had alſo furniſhed them with proper Inſtincts for finding out in a wide World ſuch Food, and ſuch Accommodations,

* Vide Tull. de Natura Deorum, Lib. 2. p. 206. *Davies.* Paſtum animalibus large & copioſe Natura eum qui cuique aptus erat comparavit. *And a little farther,* Dedit eadem Natura belluis & ſenſum & appetitum, ut altero conatum haberent ad Naturales paſtus capeſſendos, altero ſecernerent peſtifera a ſalutaribus. p. 207.

modations, as would be fitteſt for them; or if all this will not amount to a Proof of Fore-thought and good Senſe, we muſt for ever deſpair of finding any ſuch Thing, and muſt believe that a Fleet or an Army of Men may be as well provided with all Neceſſaries, ſo as nothing ſhall be wanting, whether we computed and proportioned the Supplies to the Number of the People, and the Time that either was to be out upon Duty; or whether no Conſideration was had beforehand what would be needful for ſuch Numbers, and for ſuch a Time: But if this be ridiculous to the laſt Degree, we cannot but joyn with the * *Pſalmiſt* in adoring and admiring God's Wiſdom in the Contrivance of our Earth, where we find all well adjuſted to the Occaſions of the Creatures that were to inhabit it, and ſay with him, O LORD, *how manifold are thy Works! in Wiſdom haſt Thou made them all: The Earth is full of Thy Riches. So is this*

* Pſal. civ. 24, 25, 27, &c.

great and wide Sea, wherein are Things creeping innumerable, both ſmall and great Beaſts. Theſe wait all upon Thee: that Thou mayſt give them their Meat in due Seaſon: That Thou giveſt them, they gather: Thou openeſt Thine Hand, they are filled with Good. For we ſtill ſee the ſame good Proviſion holding out for the Uſe of the Animal Race, without any conſiderable Diminution from what it was in the *Pſalmiſt*'s Days; tho' ſome Thouſands of Years have paſs'd ſince the *Pſalmiſt* made this Obſervation, yet the Stock of Proviſions has not failed, *and the Eyes of all do* ſtill, as well as then, *wait upon* GOD, *and He giveth them their Meat in due Seaſon.* The Inſtances of Wiſdom and Contrivance are as many as the Things of the World; if we cannot find out all the Uſes they ſerve for, we ſhould be ſo fair as to acknowledge, That ſuch Things may have proper Uſes, tho' we know not what they are. This I think is reaſonable, ſo long as we cannot deny, that there are many Things which do as regularly tend to a certain End and Purpoſe, as if they had been

been formed and contrived for ſuch an End by the beſt Underſtanding. In ſuch Caſe our not knowing the Uſes of ſome Works of Nature, ought to paſs for no Proof of any Thing, unleſs it be of our own Ignorance; and we might as well argue, that there is no Contrivance in the Works of human Art, becauſe perhaps, the Animals below us cannot diſcover our Intention in the Contrivance of them, as that there was no Intention or Deſign in the Works of Nature, only becauſe we cannot always find what it was.

HAVING now, by the Help of Motion, Intelligence, and the Regularity of the World, evidently proved, That there muſt be ſome Powerful, Wiſe, and Intelligent BEING different from Matter, the *Atheiſt* muſt be contented to come into the Number of thoſe Perſons which my *Text* was fitted for, who profeſſing themſelves to be wiſer and more knowing than others, were yet ſo unfortunate as to make no other Diſcoveries but that of their

own Folly. For whilſt he pretends ſome Difficulties in Religious Belief, as the Reaſon of his leaving us, he is, as I have already ſhewn, contented to take up with much greater ones in avoiding them, and can give no tolerable Account of the moſt remarkable *Phænomena* in Nature, ſuch as Motion, Intelligence, and the regular Variety that appears in the Univerſe; and therefore muſt have ſuffered himſelf to be byaſs'd by Prejudices while he was examining the Queſtion in diſpute between us; the Conſequence of which will be, That he cannot ſecure himſelf from the Apprehenſions of Puniſhment from the Hands of *That* GOD, whom he has wilfully denied. For I have already ſhewn, That a Man may be culpable for his Errors and Miſtakes, if he has not taken due Care to avoid them, but has ſuffered himſelf to be ſwayed by any Paſſion or Inclination, or any other Motive beſides a ſincere Love for the Truth *. The only Refuge he has left

* Serm. II.

leſt muſt be this; That tho' there be a Wiſe and Powerful BEING, that at firſt created, and does ſtill govern and direct the *Natural* World, yet he ſees no Reaſon for believing, that He has any Regard to the *Moral* World, to the Virtues and Vices of Men, or to their Religious Behaviour here; that there is no ſuch Things in Nature as Vertue and Vice, Honeſty and Baſeneſs; or if there be, that GOD will take no Notice of them. What Grounds there are for ſuch a Suppoſition, will be conſidered in the following Diſcourſe.

SERMON XI.

ISAIAH V. 20,

Wo unto them that call Evil Good, and Good Evil; that put Darkneſs for Light, and Light for Darkneſs; that put Bitter for Sweet, and Sweet for Bitter.

THE Perſons here mentioned were not Speculative *Atheiſts*, but only very wicked Livers, that endeavoured to conceal their own bad Actions by the pretence of ſome good and laudable Deſign they had in their View; and would therefore

paſs them upon the World for Acts of Virtue and Goodneſs, whereas the really good Acts of others, by their Miſrepreſentation of them, paſs'd for either Acts of Weakneſs or Wickedneſs. They were not hardy enough to deny a real Difference between Good and Evil, Light and Darkneſs, Bitter and Sweet; they only endeavoured to put off their own Deeds of Darkneſs, for ſuch as would bear the Light, and the niceſt Obſervation; and the Actions of their Adverſaries, tho' they had never ſo fair an Appearance, for ſuch as would not bear to be look'd upon, or abide the Teſt of a careful Inſpection. Their *own* Acts of Injuſtice, how bitter ſoever to thoſe who ſuffer'd by them, muſt be taken for Acts of Kindneſs, and the Effects of Sweetneſs of Temper; whilſt the moſt indulgent and beſt natured Acts of other People ſhall paſs with them for a bitter and malicious Deſign of Cheating and Ruining Men.

'Tis true, the Character of theſe Men does not come up to that of our *Hobbiſt*;

Hobbiſt; becauſe tho' they did in Reality confound all the Diſtinctions of Moral Good and Evil; yet they did not offer to tell the World, as the *Hobbiſt*, with great Gravity pretends to do, That there was no Difference between Virtue and Vice; much leſs did they undertake a ſerious Defence of ſo monſtrous a Propoſition: But neither any ſacred or profane Author would furniſh me with a *Text* or a *Motto* that would exactly anſwer this Character of our *Hobbiſt*; becauſe there was generally more Modeſty in the World, before *he* made his Appearance in it. For *he* ſcorns to palliate his Faults, or to impoſe upon the World by making them paſs for Virtues, but openly and aloud maintains, That there are no Faults, or any ſuch Differences in Nature as thoſe of Virtue and Vice, in the uſual Meaning of thoſe Words; and that nothing deſerves ſuch Names, but what is profitable or unprofitable, pleaſant or unpleaſant; that whoever talks of an unprofitable or unpleaſant Good, or a profitable and pleaſant Evil,

talks

talks Nonſenſe, has no Meaning in what he ſays, but utters mere Sounds without any Signification belonging to them.

I HAVE already ſhewn the Neceſſity of admitting a Wiſe and Intelligent BEING that concerns himſelf in the Government of the *Natural* World, in keeping up that Order which He at firſt deſigned, and does continually execute; there are many who profeſs to believe this true, and yet pretend, "That "they cannot ſee the ſame Evidence "for his concerning himſelf with the "Behaviour of *Moral Agents*; and think "that GOD does not mind which Way "Things go in the *Moral* World; they "are contented to believe that he has "taken all proper Care in ordering "and contriving the Motions of *Na*"*tural Agents*, and in ſeeing them fully "executed according to his firſt De"ſign; but that a *Moral Agent* having "received from Him a Freedom of "Acting as he pleaſes, whenever he "acts freely, he acts in purſuance of "that Nature which He has given

"him,

" him, and his Actions are equally agree-
" able to him, whether properly Free
" or Licentious, morally Good or mo-
" rally Evil." The Reaſons by which they pretend to Support this Opinion, are theſe:

1ſt, " THAT they cannot ſee any
" Difference between Moral Good and
" Evil, Virtue and Vice. Or,

2dly, " IF there ſhould be ſuch a
" Difference, they are ſure that GOD
" would not concern himſelf about the
" Behaviour of *Moral Agents*, becauſe
" they cannot obſerve Him making a-
" ny Diſtinction by Rewards and Pu-
" niſhments, between the Obſervance
" or not Obſervance of what is called
" Moral Good."

As to the firſt of theſe: " They are
" perſuaded that there is no ſuch Thing
" in Nature as Virtue or Vice, but that
" 'tis merely the Faſhion and Fancy of
" People, becauſe it varies in different
" Countries, and at different Times:
" that Legiſlators have always made the
" Publick Utility, ſuch as it appeared
" to them, the only Rule of their Laws.

" This

" This they think cannot be doubted; " becauſe when 'twas believed that the " Publick might be better ſerved by " the Breach of a Law of Moral Ho- " neſty, they made no Scruple of en- " couraging the Subject, to break it. " Conſequently, Utility is the only Rule " whereby to judge of Moral Ho- " neſty: And therefore no ſuch Thing " as Moral Good, when it differs " from the Natural Good; but it loſes " its Nature from the Time it ceaſes " to be Profitable, and becomes Evil " or Unprofitable. Which ſhews Ho- " neſty or Virtue, when deſerted by " Utility, to be an empty Name that " has no Exiſtence in Nature, and a " fit Subject for none but a *Stoick*, who " knew little of Nature, and was al- " ways talking againſt it, to ſpend his " Time upon."

BUT for all this Objection, the Religious Man affirms Virtue to be Virtue in Adverſity, even when the Practice of it is Unprofitable to us; and Vice to be Vice, tho' we outwardly thrive

thrive and ſeem to be Gainers by it. And for theſe Reaſons:

1ſt, BECAUSE if we ſuppoſe the Exiſtence of Intelligent Beings, ſuch Beings I mean, as can compare one Thing with another, and *underſtand* as well as *feel* Differences, the different Circumſtances of Perſons will neceſſarily make a Difference in the Character of their Actions, with regard to the Judgment of ſuch Intelligent Beings.

2dly, BECAUSE thoſe who have conſidered the Nature of human Actions with the moſt Care, ſuch as Philoſophers and Legiſlators, have built their Rules and Laws upon the Suppoſition of there being ſuch a Difference in Nature.

3dly, BECAUSE thoſe who leaſt of all obſerve Moral Differences in their Practice, but referr all to Pleaſure or Profit, cannot but confeſs a Difference in ſome Caſes.

1ſt, BECAUSE ſo long as there are ſuch Intelligent Beings, as can compare one Thing with another, and *underſtand* as well as *feel* Differences; the different Circumſtances of Perſons will neceſſarily

neceſſarily make a Difference in the Character of their Actions, with Regard to the Judgment of ſuch Intelligent Beings. The great Fallacy of the *Hobbiſt's* Argument lies in this: That they conſider a Man only as capable of receiving the Ideas of Pleaſure and Pain, Convenience or Inconvenience, without conſidering him as a Rational Being that by comparing one Thing with another, and obſerving how far they agree, and wherein they diſagree, may take Notice of other Differences, which his Reaſon aſſures him to be as real as thoſe of Pleaſure and Pain, Convenience and Inconvenience. That the Animals inferior to Man diſcover nothing in the Nature of Things beyond the Pleaſure and Pain they receive from them, may be probable enough; becauſe we do not find they have ſuch a Power as Man has, of comparing their Ideas with one another, and of forming Complex ones, ſuch as are thoſe concerning Moral Truths; or of forming general Propoſitions from any reflex Act of the Mind upon particular Things;

Things; but to an Intellectual Being furniſhed with ſuch Powers of Mind, which Man confeſſedly is, we affirm, that there muſt appear to be what we call *Moral* as well as *Natural* Differences antecedent to all poſitive Laws made concerning them; becauſe the different Circumſtances of Things and Perſons muſt neceſſarily make a Difference in *human* Actions, altho' the Material or Natural Action conſidered by itſelf, and without Regard to thoſe Circumſtances, be exactly the ſame. For it cannot be denied that different Circumſtances will neceſſarily make the Relations of Perſons to each other really different, and muſt therefore ſo far alter the Nature of any Action, as to give it a different Character; as for Inſtance, The Action by which we put an End to a Man's Life, may be varied very much by the Circumſtances of the Perſon whoſe Life we take away; as, Whether he be an innocent Man, or whether I had been much obliged to him, or there were none of theſe Conſiderations, but I did it for

preſerving

preſerving my own Life; tho' the Action be the ſame in either Caſe, conſidered as the taking away the Life of a Man; yet ſure every one muſt ſee a Difference between taking away another Man's Life for the Preſervation of his own, and taking it away from a Man that has done him no Hurt at all, nor given any Indication of any ſuch Intention; much more, if he has always been a great Benefactor and a Friend to him. Theſe Differences in Caſes, Reaſon by diſtinguiſhing Circumſtances does diſcover to us; and ſo long as there are ſuch Rational Agents as Men, Reaſon will make ſuch Diſcoveries, let the *Hobbiſt* wink as hard as he pleaſes. And we have a remarkable Proof of it in *Vaninus*, who gave ſtronger Evidence of his being a ſincere *Atheiſt*, than any of the Brother *Atheiſts* ſince have cared to give us; for tho' he might have ſaved his Life by renouncing thoſe Atheiſtick Opinions he was charged with, yet he choſe rather to die, than to do ſo mean and unworthy an Act, as to deny or diſown what he himſelf

himſelf believed to be true. *Atheiſt* as he was, he could not avoid giving his Teſtimony againſt our *Hobbiſt*, and acknowledging, "That a Man may be "in ſuch Circumſtances of Life, as ſhall "make him guilty of a baſe and diſ-"honeſt Act in ſaving his own Life." And therefore that there may be ſuch Things in Nature as Honour and Honeſty, Baſeneſs and Cowardice, abſtracting from all Conſiderations of Pleaſure and Profit. The labouring a Point ſo plain as this, might look like a Miſrepreſentation of our modern *Atheiſt*, if Mr. *Hobbs* had not told us *, "That "all the natural Right GOD has to "our Obedience, is founded upon this; "That his Power is infinite, and that "all our Obligations to obey Him in "Virtue of the Law of Nature, ariſe "from this, that his Power is irreſiſt-"able." The Conſequence of which muſt be, That in a State of Nature we can be under no Obligation to Him or any other Being on account of Juſtice

* Hobbs, De Cive, pag. 260, 262.

or Gratitude for the Benefits of Creation, and Preſervation of our Beings; or for any other Reaſon, but only this plain one, That we cannot help it. I cannot ſee any Thing the *Hobbiſt* can with any tolerable Shew of Senſe anſwer to the Arguments I have already urg'd againſt him, unleſs it be, That our conceiving ſuch Moral Differences in human Actions, will not prove their real Exiſtence in Nature; as the Mind of Man is capable of forming Complex Ideas, that have no Exiſtence out of the Mind; and that Moral Differences muſt be ſuch, becauſe if they had a real Exiſtence in Nature, there could be no more Diſpute about them, than there is about Pleaſure and Pain. But our Anſwer is, That the Caſes are not parallel; becauſe Pleaſure and Pain are felt and judged by our Senſes, without any Want of Reflection to aſſure us of their Difference, and therefore all Perſons whether wiſe or unwiſe, are equally affected by them; but the Beauty of Virtue, and the Deformity of Vice, will require ſome Degree of Reaſoning from

us,

us, if we would diſcover them; and yet this Reaſoning of ours does not make theſe Differences, but finds them what they are in Nature. For no Man ſure will allow it to be a good Argument to prove there is no ſuch Thing in Nature as Symmetry and Proportion, becauſe all Perſons are not equally affected by them, or becauſe ſome Perſons ſhall admire that which has neither Juſtneſs nor Elegance. And why then ſhould it be an Argument againſt the Difference between Vertue and Vice, that all Perſons are not equally ſenſible of the Beauty of one, and the Uglineſs of the other; but that ſome ſhall have ſo corrupted a Taſte, as to ſee as much Beauty in the one as the other? The internal Characters of Mind, as well as the external Proportions of Body, will continue to be what they are, notwithſtanding any wrong Judgments we may make of them; for the Nature of Things is inflexible, whatever Thoughts we entertain of them. What the Author of the *Characteriſticks* has ſaid on this Occaſion is very juſt,

in these Words: "Should a Writer up-
"on *Musick* (addressing himself to the
Lovers of that Art) "declare to them,
"that the Measure or Rule of Har-
"mony was Caprice or Will, Humour
"or Fashion, 'tis not very likely he
"should be heard with great Atten-
"tion, or treated with real Gravity;
"for Harmony is Harmony by Na-
"ture, let Men judge ever so ridi-
"culously of *Musick*; so is Symmetry
"and Proportion founded still in Na-
"ture, let Mens Fancy prove ever so
"barbarous or Gothick in their Ar-
"chitecture, Sculpture, or whatever
"other designing Art: 'Tis the same
"Case, says he, where Life and Man-
"ners are concerned, the same Num-
"bers, Harmony and Proportion, have
"Place in Morals, and are discoverable
"in the Characters of Mankind *."
If this Author has Reasoned truly, the *Hobbist*'s Denial of Moral Differences will be no better a Proof of there being no such Things in Nature, than ignorant Persons

* Characteristicks, Vol. 1. p. 353.

Perſons not diſcovering the juſt Proportions of any Work, would be a Proof that there is no ſuch Thing in Nature as Proportion; for ſince there is and muſt be a wrong as well as a right Taſte in judging of the internal Characters of the Mind, as well as of the Proportions and Figures of Bodies, the vitiated Taſte of a *Hobbiſt* ought to paſs for no better an Argument againſt Ethical Truth, than the Gothick Taſte of an illiterate Perſon be taken as an Evidence againſt the Truth of any other Science.

2dly, THOSE who have conſidered human Nature with the moſt Exactneſs, ſuch as Philoſophers and Legiſlators, have formed their Ethical and Political Schemes upon the Suppoſition of Moral Differences in Nature. And

1ſt, OF the Philoſophers, there was none of them of any Note, without excepting even *Epicurus* himſelf, who did not agree in preſcribing Vertue, as that which would beſt of all alleviate the Miſeries that human Nature is ſubject

to, and, generally ſpeaking, procure for it all that Happineſs which it was capable of receiving. They all of them obſerved that there were two principal Motives of human Actions, *viz.* Reaſon and Appetite, together with all the Train of Paſſions accompanying thoſe Appetites; they obſerved that theſe laſt did often incline us to purſue either improper Objects, or proper Objects in an improper or undue Manner; but that there was another Principle of human Actions, *viz.* Reaſon or good Senſe; which when it prevailed and could be hearkned to, would direct what Objects ought to be courted, and in what Degree; that as the former Motive inclined us to take the Agreeable, as the Way to true Happineſs, ſo this laſt diſcovered a more excellent Rule of Action. We cannot poſſibly miſtake their Meaning, becauſe we ſee the whole Deſign of their Ethical Treatiſes turned upon promoting the Influence of this Rational Principle, and becauſe we find them always making Honeſty or Moral Good, the Rule of this Principle, which

is taking for granted, That the Happineſs of Man, conſidered as a Rational Creature, was no otherwiſe attainable, but by hearkning to Reaſon, and that there was no Truth, Reaſon or good Senſe, ſeparate from Virtue. The *Stoicks* were ſo far from being of Mr. *Hobbs*'s Opinion, that there was nothing in Nature but Pleaſant and Unpleaſant, Convenient and Inconvenient, that they would not allow theſe even a Share in making up human Happineſs; but that the Happineſs of Man conſiſted in his having ſo reduced his Appetites, as to be able to live without them; and to be contented with the τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῖν, by which they meant the Practice of Virtue, which was always in a Man's Power, as 'tis always in his Power to be an honeſt Man, tho' not to be a rich Man or at his Eaſe. Even the *Epicureans* themſelves, who firſt pretended to make Men happy by reſcuing them from the Fear of the Gods, and from the Reſtraints which Religion *then* laid upon them, were ſo far from taking off thoſe Reſtraints which Virtue

lays upon Men, that, as the Learned Dean of *Norwich* tells us, they acknowledged Virtue to be the only Way that leads to all that Happineſs which the Life of Man is capable of receiving *; and 'tis certain, the good Dean did not ſpeak too favourable of them, if what *Laeretius* ſays of *Epicurus* in his Life be true †. He owned, "There "could be no ſuch Thing as Pleaſure, (in which he made the Happineſs of human Life to conſiſt,) "without Vir-"tue. That bodily Pleaſures or Free-"dom from Pain, were among the "τὰ ἄλλα, which might be ſeparated "from Happineſs; but Virtue was in-"ſeparable from it: That Pleaſure and "Profit were Things of a change-"able Nature, βρωτὰ, ſuch as were "ſometimes Good for a Man, and "ſometimes Evil, according to the Diſ-"cretion

* Prideaux Connexion. *Part* I. *p.* 434.

† Ἐπίκυρος καὶ ἀχώριστον φησὶ τῆς ἡδονῆς τὴν φρονήσιν μόνην, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα χωρίζεσθαι οἷον βρωτά. Sect. 138.

" cretion of the Man that enjoyed " them; but Virtue was always Good " for him." So far was *Epicurus* from denying Moral Differences; which ought to ſhame our *Atheiſts*, who would ſubvert the original Nature of Things, in order to gratify their baſe Appetites; and therefore, as the before mentioned Learned Dean expreſſes himſelf, " Tho' " our modern *Infidels* build their impi- " ous Doctrines upon *Epicurus*'s Philoſo- " phy; (they both agreeing to make all Things ſpring from Matter in Motion, without taking in a Powerful and Wiſe BEING to move Matter, and direct its Motion) " yet they cannot their " immoral and wicked Lives." And therefore muſt be inexcuſable, while they pretend not to ſee any Difference between Virtue and Vice, tho' the Beauty of the one, and the Deformity of the other, were acknowledged by all thoſe *Atheiſts*, who lived under a Religion in which Virtue and Vice were not

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* Ibidem. Part I. p. 434.

not near so truly described, as they are in our Christian Religion. But,

2*dly*, I AM to shew, That all Legislators or Founders of *Free-States* have supposed the Obligation to be just and honest, as the Foundation of their several Constitutions, and the best Supports of them. It cannot be denied that Legislators were Persons sufficiently qualified for Deciding this Question, as they are supposed to have been as well acquainted with the Springs of human Actions as any Persons whatever. That they took for granted there was such a Thing in Nature, as Moral Honesty, and believed that the World too was of the same Opinion, is evident from hence, That they depended more upon the Consent of the People than upon Force (the only Support of Tyrannical Governments) for the Preservation and Continuance of their Establishments: But every Body sees that the Consent of the People could never be a Foundation for a durable Society, unless they supposed the People prepossess'd with an Opinion, That this Consent of theirs once

once made, had laid them under an Obligation of continuing it; which they could have no Reaſon to believe, unleſs they ſuppoſed them under an Obligation of keeping their Word, even whilſt they were in a State of Nature, or before they met together, and had given their Conſent. The *Hobbiſt* ſuppoſes them obliged by Virtue of their Compact, but that antecedently to this Bargain made with their Governor, there was no Obligation upon any of them to be faithful or juſt: becauſe there was no ſuch Thing as Faith or Juſtice in Nature, the Obligation to Practice theſe being to be fetched entirely from the voluntary Agreement we made at our firſt entring into Society. But ſuppoſing the ancient Founders of States to be perſuaded, as Mr. *Hobbs* pretended to be, That there was no ſuch Thing as Faith or Juſtice, Breach of Promiſe or Iniquity, before the Laws of Societies had made ſuch a Diſtinction in human Actions, they muſt ſee that Men would be no more obliged by any Conſent they had given,

or

or any Promiſes they had made, either to continue their Conſent, or to make good their Promiſes, than if they had done nothing at all of either; for it would be impoſſible in the Nature of the Thing, that by any Act of theirs they ſhould lay themſelves under an Obligation, becauſe ſuch an Act would be made in a State of Nature, when 'tis ſuppoſed there was no Difference between Faithfulneſs and Unfaithfulneſs, breaking of Promiſes, and keeping them: And therefore their Conſent being given at a Time, when they were under no Obligation of keeping their Word, they cannot be obliged to make good what they had conſented to. This is ſo evident, that had the Founders of *Free* States believed as Mr. *Hobbs*, they cannot be ſuppoſed weak enough to have laid any Streſs upon the Peoples Promiſes: but as we are ſure they did, and thought them the beſt Security of their Eſtabliſhments, we cannot doubt whether moral Differences were acknowledged in their Times as Obligatory, even before any

poſitive Conſtitutions were made by them. And if Mr. *Hobbs* had not been the worſt Politician in the World, he would have kept his Thoughts to himſelf, and not taken away the ſtrongeſt Supports of thoſe Societies, which the Ancients thought to be the only Societies worth preſerving; and left us the Poſſibility of only *ſuch*, as none that had either Courage or Honeſty would care to be concerned in.

BUT it may be ſaid, That ſome of the ancient Legiſlators could not believe there was any Juſtice or Injuſtice independent of poſitive Conſtitutions, becauſe they gave Impunity, and even Encouragement to the Breach of ſome Moral Laws: an Inſtance of which is ſeen in *Lycurgus*, the *Spartan* Legiſlator, by whoſe Laws a Licence was given to young People of robbing their Neighbours, if they could do it without being diſcovered; and this Licence was given by him as a Means of ſharpening the Wits of the *Spartan* Youth, and making them fitter for Out-witting their Neighbouring States:

Here

Here it ſhould ſeem that Equity and Honeſty were forced to give way to an Appearance of Publick Utility.

IN Anſwer to this Objection, we ſay, That the making Laws concerning Property, is making Laws concerning a Thing which is allowed to be of a Changeable and Poſitive Nature. And as no Body doubts, that a Legiſlator may take away Part of a Man's Property for the Support of the Publick; ſo *Lycurgus* might think it lawful or equitable for him, without offending againſt the Eternal Rules of Right and Wrong, to ſubject the Properties of particular Perſons to ſuch an Inconvenience as this, for obtaining what he imagined would be a Publick Service. But,

2dly, THE laſt Act of *Lycurgus* before he left *Sparta*, evidently ſhews that he was fully perſuaded of the Obligation of one Law of Nature, *viz.* Of performing a Religious Promiſe, at leaſt, he believed that the People of *Sparta* were univerſally of that Opinion: for in order to make his Laws perpetual,

as

as *Plutarch* tells us *, He gathered all the People together, and perſuaded them to bind themſelves by an Oath not to alter his Laws, till he ſhould return again; which he never intended. This would have been a very weak Contrivance, unleſs he ſuppoſed the *Spartans* thought themſelves obliged by their Promiſes. For if there was no Difference in Nature between keeping one's Word, and breaking it, there would be no Reaſon to fear the Diſpleaſure of the Gods for doing what was in its own Nature indifferent; and therefore he could not be ſo weak a Man, as to believe they would obſerve their Oaths when he was gone, if he had not been well aſſured that his *Spartans* did univerſally believe there was ſuch a Thing as Faith and Honour, before he had given them a Being by his Laws.

3*dly*, THOSE who leaſt of all obſerve Moral Differences in their Practice, and referr all to Pleaſure or Profit,

* Plutarch in Vitâ Lycurgi.

fit, cannot but confeſs a Difference in ſome Caſes; for if they can have their Pleaſure or Profit as well by obſerving the Rules of Equity, as otherwiſe, there are Few that would not chooſe to have them in an honeſt Way; ſcarce any Man of the moſt vitiated Taſte, would chooſe to have what he wiſhed for by injuring his Neighbour, if he might have it as well without hurting him. If at any Time there have been particular Perſons that have wantonly injured their Fellow-Creatures, they have been wont to paſs under the Character of Monſters. The Unbeliever ought to aſſign ſome Reaſon of this conſtant Appearance in Behalf of what we call Virtue; for if the Reaſon of this *Phænomenon* is to be drawn from hence, Either that the *Reaſon* of Man diſcovers, even to the moſt vicious Perſon, a Fitneſs and Unfitneſs of Things abſtracted from Pleaſure and Profit, and which he cannot avoid taking Notice of when his own Pleaſure and Profit are not concerned; or that there is an Inclination in the human Species

which

which moves it to Acts of Benevolence and Good-nature, when not checked by private Intereſt; which ever of theſe be aſſigned as the Cauſe of this Appearance, it will ſtill be a ſtrong Proof of a Difference in the Nature of Things. For if Rational Creatures in Virtue of their Reaſon diſcover any ſuch Things, they muſt have as good a Foundation in Nature as the Reaſon of Rational Agents; or if Inclination leads them to ſuch a Behaviour, ſo long as this Inclination appears to be almoſt Univerſal, admitting very few Exceptions, nothing leſs than the Nature of Things can be a Cauſe ſufficient of ſo regular and extenſive an Effect.

THERE is one other Difficulty, which is ſometimes raiſed againſt the Proof of Moral Differences, which is, That granting ſuch Differences do indeed appear to us, yet they may not appear *ſuch* to the Supreme, Intelligent BEING; that is, That Truth, Juſtice and Goodneſs, may appear otherwiſe to GOD than they do to us Men: and they pretend to ſupport this Opinion of

theirs, in this Manner: That the Nature and Perfections of GOD are Incomprehensible, his Ways are in the Deep, and his Footsteps not known; and therefore what may be just and equitable in our Opinions, may not be so according to the Judgment He forms of Things; consequently, the *Infidel* will say, Let it be never so certain that some Things do appear to us Morally Good, others Evil; yet till it appears that GOD judges of them as we do, we may still be safe, altho' we do not practice agreeably to those Differences as apprehended by us. And they pretend to be confirmed in this Belief, because they cannot see GOD making any visible Distinction between Good and Bad Men.

IN Answer to the first Part of the Objection, we say, That how incomprehensible soever the Nature of the Supreme BEING, and his Manner of Thinking, may be to us, yet as we have proved, That the Morality of human Actions is founded upon the Nature of Things, upon the Fitness

or

or Unfitneſs which Things evidently appear to us to have in their Relation to each other, if we could be ſuppoſed to miſtake when we judge according to ſuch Evidence, and that Things appeared quite different to GOD than they did to us, it would be beſt for us to leave off Reaſoning upon any Kind of Truth whatever, and content ourſelves, as ſome of the Antients did, with the bare Appearances of Things. For if thoſe Relations of Things which are the Foundation of Moral Differences, appear to us with as ſtrong an Evidence, as any Thing of whoſe Nature and Exiſtence we think ourſelves moſt aſſured, we muſt then believe them to be really ſuch as they appear to us, or elſe be contented to doubt of every other Kind of Truth, as well as Religious Truth. And then the *Atheiſt*'s Safety will lie in this; That Men are always deceived: Which may be true enough with Regard to himſelf and his Friends, while they miſpend their Time in accounting for Things by Chance or Ne-

ceſſity; but I am perſuaded the reſt of the World will conclude that Cauſe to be a very bad one, which cannot be defended without giving up the Truth of our Faculties. For let there be never ſo much Difference between the Perfection of GOD's Knowledge and that of ours; yet 'tis plain, our Knowledge, as far as it reaches, muſt be real; or elſe there will be no ſuch Thing as human Knowledge.

As to the ſecond Part of the Objection, That GOD makes no viſible Diſtinction of Good and Bad Men; which they think a good Proof, that He does not judge of Good and Evil as we do: In Anſwer to it, I will ſhew,

2dly, THAT GOD may have ſuch Apprehenſions of Virtue and Vice as we have, (abating for the Difference between a perfectly Wiſe BEING, and a Being whoſe Knowledge reaches to few Things) and yet not make any greater Diſtinction between the Good and the Bad, than what we ſee at preſent. The *Infidel*, as I have already

ready proved *, cannot be ſure that he ſhall not continue to Think after he is dead, and be conſcious too of his being the ſame Thinking Perſon he was; and therefore he can never be ſure that this Life is not a State of Probation for another; and then he may be a Sufferer afterwards, tho' not now, by his Infidelity. For it is not at all inconſiſtent with the Notions we have of Holineſs, that a Holy BEING ſhould permit Wickedneſs to thrive for a Time, and Goodneſs to be the Sufferer, ſuppoſing a Time to come when the Good and Bad ſhall be viſibly diſtinguiſhed by Rewards and Puniſhments; unleſs any Man could prove it inconſiſtent with Goodneſs to make a Trial of the Behaviour of Free Agents, (which no Body I think will offer to ſay.) For 'tis certain an exact Diſcrimination of the Good and the Bad by Rewards and Puniſhments, would not be conſiſtent with any State of Probation: if the Wicked conſtantly

* See Sermon IX.

met with Vengeance from Heaven for Acts of Wickedneſs, who would dare to be wicked? And what Merit in being otherwiſe? Which is Reaſon enough for a Good BEING's not making any ſuch Difference, altho' there be a real Difference between Virtue and Vice, and altho' this Difference appears *ſuch* to the Supreme BEING as it does to *us*. We ought rather to judge from GOD's making no Diſtinction at preſent between Good and Bad Men, that He intends to do it ſome other Time. That 'tis only delayed for the preſent, becauſe ſuch a Diſtinction would not ſerve the Purpoſes of trying how Free Agents would behave themſelves; but that when the Time of Trial ſhould be over, which will be at our leaving this World, that then Virtue ſhould meet with that Happineſs that naturally belongs to it, and Vice the Evil and Miſery which are its proper Portion. Theſe are ſuch neceſſary Conſequences from the different Natures of Good and Evil, and from their being apprehended as ſuch by the Supreme BEING,

ING, that 'tis as impoſſible that it ſhould be otherwiſe, as that *Bitter* ſhould have the ſame Effects as *Sweet*, or *Sweet* as *Bitter*; *Light* as *Darkneſs*, or *Darkneſs* as *Light*: And therefore GOD's Forbearance of Sinners at preſent, is no reaſonable Ground for the *Atheiſt* to build any ſuch Hopes upon, as tho' it muſt *always* fare as well with him, as it does *now*.

SERMON XII.

JOHN XV. 24.

If I had not done among them the Works which none other Man did, they had not had Sin.

IN the foregoing Diſcourſe I proved, That the Behaviour of ſuch a Moral Agent as Man, could not be indifferent in the Sight of GOD, becauſe there is a real Difference in the Nature of Things between ſome of our Moral Actions, and others of them,

them, between those we call virtuous, and the vicious ones: and that such a Difference must appear to the Supreme BEING. The Consequence of which will be, That it concerns every Man that has a Regard to his own Welfare, to inform himself what Behaviour will be most agreeable to HIM; and what will be displeasing to HIM. And as he has heard of many Persons who pretend to have received Instructions from Heaven, in order to tell Men what Behaviour GOD would require at their Hands, to examine, Whether there be not Truth in the Pretensions of some or other of them.

IN Answer to this, the *Infidel* says, "He has no Reason to concern himself "in any Pretensions to Revelation, because he is persuaded,

1st, "THAT there can be no ration- "nal Proof given of any Revelation "from Heaven.

2dly, THAT if there were any Means "of proving, that a Person had receiv- "ed Authority from GOD to discover "some Truths to Mankind, that all "such

"such Discoveries would be useless or "unnecessary; and therefore cannot "come from GOD, because He does "nothing in vain, or without great "and good Reasons.

3dly, "BECAUSE there have been "so many Pretences to Revelation, and "all of them pretending to have been "supported by the extraordinary Pow-"er of GOD, that there is no finding "which of them is the true one, if "any such were."

As to the first Argument against Revelation, "That there can be no Ra-"tional Proof made of any Revelation "from Heaven; they support it thus: "That the Nature or Goodness of the "Doctrine which a Man pretends to "have received from Heaven, will ne-"ver of itself prove its Extraction to be "from thence; because the same good "Doctrines have been taught by those "who never pretended to any Reve-"lation, as well as by those that did; "and therefore that the only Means "left of proving a Person to be a "Teacher commissioned from Above,

"must

"must be his doing some uncommon
"Works in Proof of his Commission,
"which cannot possibly be done by
"any Powers that are lodged in Na-
"ture; by the *mere* Power of Man, or
"of any Agent inferior in Power to
"GOD himself." But the *Spinosist* says,
"That extraordinary and uncommon
"Works are as much the Effects of
"some Powers of Nature, tho' un-
"known to us, as those that are the
"most common, and for that Reason
"better known to us; consequently,
"whenever they happen, they will
"never prove that the Person by
"whom they seem to be done, was
"impowered by GOD. That the Ar-
"gument here used by our SAVIOUR
"to prove his Divine Mission, drawn
"from the uncommon Works He had
"done among them, as being more
"and greater than any other Per-
"son had pretended to before him,
"might be a good Argument to the
"*Jews*, and make them worthy of
"Blame in not accepting Him upon
"such

"such an Evidence, because they "must acknowledge such uncommon "Works to be a good Proof of a "Divine Mission, their Religion "being founded upon such Kind of "Works; That *Origen* himself thought "our SAVIOUR chose to come among "the *Jews* rather than any other Na-"tion, because they having been used "to Miracles, would be more easily "convinced by comparing our SAVI-"OUR's Works with what they had "heard of *. But that in themselves "they really prove nothing but our "Ignorance of the Powers of Nature; "and therefore can never prove, to a "Person not prepossess'd in Favour of "Miracles, that GOD is any more con-"cerned in producing them, than He "is in any the most common Appear-"ances of Nature." For *Spinosa* plain-ly

* Contra Celsum. Lib. 2. p. 95.

* Διὰ τοῦτο δ' οἶμαι καὶ τὸν Ἰησοῦν οὐκ ἄλλῳ, ἔθνει ἢ Ἰουδαίοις ἐπιδεδημεκέναι, τοῖς ἐθάσι γενομένοις πρὸς τὰ παράδοξα, τῇ παραθέσει τῶν πεπιστευμένων πρὸς τὰ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ γενόμενα, κ, τ, λ,

ly places miraculous Facts to the Account of Mens Ignorance of the Works of Nature, in these Words: *Miracula & ignorantiam pro æquipollentibus sumpsi.* And he gives this Reason for his making Miracles and Ignorance to be equivalent Terms; *Quia ij qui Dei Existentiam & Religionem miraculis adstruere conantur, rem obscuram per aliam magis obscuram & quam maximè ignorant* (*viz.* the Powers of Nature) *ostendere volunt, atque ita novum argumentandi genus adferunt, religendo scilicet non ad impossibile, ut aiunt, sed ignorantiam* †. That is, "We pretend to prove the "Truth of certain Propositions, of "which we can judge by our Reason, by certain wonderful Facts of "whose Causes we are not able to "judge at all, and therefore must "be less known than the Propositions "which they are intended to prove." From thence he inferrs, "That Mi-

"racles,

† Epist. 23.

"racles, the Cauſes of which are un-
"known to us, can never be a Proof
"of any Thing, unleſs it were poſ-
"ſible or allowable to enlighten an
"obſcure Propoſition by another that
"was equally or more obſcure than
"itſelf." This is the chief Difficulty by which the Unbeliever pretends to defend himſelf in not believing any Thing of our Chriſtian Revelation.

HOWEVER *Spinoſa* being aware that he might be preſſed with ſome extraordinary Facts mentioned in the *Goſpels*, ſuch as raiſing *Lazarus* to Life, after he muſt needs have been dead, having lain Four Days in the Grave; and our SAVIOUR's own Reſurrection, after He had been known to be really dead by vaſt Numbers of Perſons, who were Spectators at his Crucifixion; and by great Numbers who ſaw him alive after his Reſurrection; that ſuch Facts as theſe ſeemed to exceed all the Powers of Nature, and therefore that Miracles would not be, as he had ſuppoſed, an Argument whoſe Strength lay only in our Ignorance of the

Powers

Powers of Nature; He goes on to ſay farther, "That if ſome Facts "be related in the *Goſpels*, which do "truly exceed all the Powers of Na- "ture, ſuch Facts were not real, but "in Appearance only." *Oldenburg* had preſs'd him to declare what he thought of the Inſtantaneous Cures, and the reſtoring of dead Bodies to Life again, of which the Writers of the *Goſpels* take Notice, whether thoſe could be the Effects of ſome occult Powers of Nature, if *really* performed; or whether he thought they were to be taken in a figurative Senſe, or that the Relators of theſe Facts intended to impoſe upon us. *Spinoſa* would not take Refuge in the laſt of theſe; but frankly owns, "That he could not deny "them to be in earneſt in the Accounts "they had given us of theſe Extraor- "dinary Works." The Air of Simplicity, and a plain Sincerity which appears in their manner of Writing, extorted this Confeſſion from him; and therefore he grants in his Anſwer to *Oldenbourg*,

Oldenbourg, *, "That the Diſciples of "our Lord were as fully perſuaded that "they ſaw their Lord after his Reſur- "rection, and at his Aſcenſion, as they "were of having ever ſeen Him du- "ring his Life-time; but that they were "deceived in believing thoſe Appear- "ances of their Lord after his Death "to have been *real*; or any thing "more than Impoſitions upon their "Senſes."

I WILL therefore ſhew 1*ſt*, That the Extraordinary Works related in the *Goſpels*, ſuppoſing them for the preſent to have been really performed, would be a ſufficient Proof of a Divine Miſſion.

2*dly*, THAT the Diſciples of our LORD were well qualified for judging, whether ſome of theſe wonderful Works were *really*, and not in *Appearance only*, done; and conſequently their Teſtimony concerning ſuch Miraculous Facts, would be as credible a Teſtimony, as it would have been concerning any other

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* In eadem Epiſtolâ.

other Matters of Fact, of which we are able to assign a Natural Cause; and then a Revelation or Divine Mission may be made evident and credible to Men.

1st, THAT the Wonderful Works related in the *Gospels*, supposing them for the present to have been really wrought, would be a sufficient Proof of a Divine Mission.

BUT before I proceed to the Proof of this Proposition, it may not be amiss to shew the Possibility of such Works being done, as those our SAVIOUR appeals to in my *Text*, and yet of not being the Effects of some Powers of Nature. For those who deny the Authority of Miracles, do even deny the Possibility of them, when considered as Works done by some Power or other, superior to Nature, and acting freely upon Nature. But the Reason of their Denying them, is built upon a Supposition, which is a mere begging the Question in Dispute between us and the *Atheist*; *viz.* That GOD is a Necessary Agent, and therefore the

the Laws of Motion muſt be neceſſarily what they are; for then it would be true indeed, that all the Effects of thoſe Laws would be equally natural, tho' perhaps not equally common, or coming ſo often under human Obſervation: And then ſuch extraordinary Occurrences, when they happened, muſt be as much the Effects of the Powers of Nature as any of thoſe that are moſt common. But we ſuppoſe, and have already proved, That the Motions of Matter are by no means neceſſarily ſuch as they are; but depend upon an Intelligent and Free BEING, who moved Matter as He thought fit: And tho' He chuſes an uniform Manner of acting upon Matter, according to what we call the Laws of Matter in Motion; yet there can be no Difficulty in conceiving that He may act otherwiſe if He pleaſes, as well as we can conceive that He might have at firſt impreſs'd different Powers upon Matter from the preſent ones; which cannot be doubted while the Principle of Gravitation that acts upon Matter,

is not essential to it; for then 'tis plain, there can be no absolute Necessity in the Nature of Matter for its gravitating at all, much less for its gravitating according to these Laws, by which our Experience tells us it now does; and then there can be no Difficulty in conceiving that GOD may change them for a *short* Time as well as for a *long* one, which makes all the Difference between Miracles or Works produced only upon extraordinary Occasions, and such as are the Effects of the settled Course of Nature; for, according to the Religious Man's Scheme, the Laws of Nature are nothing more than certain Rules which GOD has freely proposed to himself, according to which He would usually act upon or move Matter; which shews there could be no Foundation for questioning the Possibility of Miracles, without taking it for granted that there was no such Thing as a Free Agent, or a Being that acts upon Choice. It being then not impossible that such Works should have been performed, as are related in the *Gospels*

altho'

altho' they were not an Effect of any Natural Powers of Matter in Motion:

I COME now to ſhew that ſuch extraordinary Works, ſuppoſing them to be done, will be a ſufficient Proof of a Divine Miſſion; for theſe Two Reaſons:

1ſt, BECAUSE they could not be the natural Effects of any Laws of Nature whatever.

2dly, BECAUSE they could not be done by any inferior Agents independently of GOD: For the only Reaſons that can be poſſibly given, why the Extraordinary Works related in the *Goſpels*, ſhould not prove, that the Perſon who appeared to work them, was impowerred by GOD, and therefore ſent by Him, muſt be either becauſe theſe Works were as much the Effects of Natural Cauſes, as any other not ſo much taken Notice of, becauſe not ſo uſual; or that they might be performed by ſome inviſible Agents ſuperior in Power to Man, tho' vaſtly inferior to GOD.

1*ſt*, THERE is no Ground for ſuppoſing that the extraordinary Works related in the *Goſpels*, as performed by our SAVIOUR, were the natural Effects of any Laws of Nature unknown to Men; becauſe if they were ſuch, no Reaſon can be given,

1*ſt*, WHY no more of them are produced. And,

2*dly*, BECAUSE ſuppoſing them to be ſo; yet how ſhould our SAVIOUR come to the Knowledge of them? Since they are ſuppoſed to be unknown to Men.

1*ſt*, I ſay, That the Works we are told to have been done by our SAVIOUR, could not be the Effects of any Laws of Nature; becauſe no Reaſon can be given why no more of them are produced. 'Tis certain, if we take in all the *pretended* as well as *real* Reſurrections of dead Bodies, with which the Hiſtory of Mankind will furniſh us, that they are exceeding few in Number; and if we leave out thoſe that want a due Atteſtation, their Number will be much ſmaller. That Nature

ſhould

ſhould be many Hundreds of Years, I may ſay, many Thouſands, in bringing forth the Reſurrection of a dead Man; and yet that this ſhould be as natural a Product of hers, as the Birth of a Man, which happens every Day, is what no Body ſure can be perſuaded to believe. As natural as the common Way of propagating Mankind is, yet if there had been very few Inſtances of its Succeſs in many Ages, we ſhould ſcarce have judged the Productions in that Way a Work of Nature; becauſe there is no ſuppoſing any Thing to be the real Cauſe of an Effect, when it ſcarce ever produces that Effect. 'Tis not doubted that a real Cauſe may be ſometimes defeated by the contrary actings of other Cauſes; but that it ſhould be almoſt always ſo, is what can never be reconciled with thoſe Signatures of Wiſdom and Contrivance, which appear in all thoſe Parts of Nature, with which we are beſt acquainted *. And tho' the *Atheiſt* will not allow them to

* See Serm. X.

be the Products of an Intelligent BEING, yet he will not deny that there is any Regularity in the Productions of Nature, or that generally ſpeaking, natural Cauſes do produce their proper Effects; but no Body will ſay there can be regular Productions, when the Cauſes of thoſe Productions ſhall fail a Million of times for once ſucceeding.

I DO not deny that many natural Effects may have paſs'd upon the World for Prodigies, becauſe Men have not been always careful in obſerving the Workings of Nature, and that more accurate Inquiries have juſtly enough thrown many of them out of the Number of ſuch Works as exceeded its Power: That many Things, if ſeldom taken Notice of, have paſs'd upon the World for Prodigies or ſuper-natural Effects in ſome illiterate Ages, which are now accounted for by the ordinary Laws of Nature. But then 'tis alſo to be conſidered, that it has not been for Want of obſerving the Nature of *dead* Bodies, that the Reſurrection of ſuch Bodies has paſs'd for a Prodigy, but becauſe

cauſe Men were well aſſured by a continued Obſervation of them, that it was not the Nature of *ſuch* Bodies to ſpring out of their Graves, as Corn does out of the Ground; and becauſe in all their Obſervation and Reading, they had met with exceeding few Inſtances of this Nature, and therefore rightly judged, that *Nature* was not qualified for making dead Carcaſſes to ſpring out of the Ground. For whatever occult Qualities there may be in the Nature of Things, yet they might eaſily ſee that if any Thing fell out directly contrary to the conſtant and ſettled Courſe of Things, or that a *dead* Body ſhould become a *living* one, inſtead of a *living* Body becoming a *dead* one, that this could not be a mere Effect of the Laws of Nature; but muſt have ſome Cauſe ſuperior to thoſe Laws, that was able to act upon Matter in a different Manner from what was uſual. Some Cauſe that had choſen to act for the moſt Part upon Matter in an uniform Manner, and yet reſerved to itſelf a Liberty,

Liberty, upon ſome Occaſions, of departing from that Rule. But,

2dly, SUPPOSING ſome of thoſe Extrordinary Works which ſeemed to be done at our SAVIOUR's Command, becauſe they appeared immediately upon his Speaking, as in his Inſtantaneous Cures of Blind, Lame, and Sick People; ſuppoſing, I ſay, theſe to have been merely Effects of ſome ſecret Laws or Powers in Nature, there ſtill remains a great Difficulty in accounting for theſe Miracles, and that is, How our SAVIOUR could know, when theſe unknown Powers would exert themſelves? He foretold before his Death, That after he had been laid in his Grave, He ſhould riſe out of it the third Day. Taking it for granted, that the Reſurrection of a Man falls within the Compaſs of the Powers of Nature, tho' unknown to us, becauſe they ſeldom appear, it would be natural to ask this Queſtion, How our SAVIOUR could know that the Laws of Nature would be ready to reſtore a dead Body to Life again juſt at that Time when He had

had foretold He ſhould riſe again? There had been Millions and Millions of Bodies, that had lain very quiet in their Graves for many Ages, and no Hiſtorical Obſervations could poſſibly have furniſhed our SAVIOUR with any Light, whereby to diſcover when Nature would be ſtrong enough to raiſe a dead Body; becauſe the Inſtances muſt have been too few to afford any Ground for forming a Judgment upon them. When He raiſed *Lazarus* out of his Grave, it ſeems to be as impoſſible that he ſhould know that Nature would have Power to reſtore him to Life again juſt at that Time when he called to him to come out of his Grave, as it would be for a mere Man by his own Natural Powers, to reſtore a dead Body to Life again. So again, What could have induced our SAVIOUR to have attempted the giving Sight to a Perſon that had been blind from his Birth, had He truſted to the Powers of Nature for the Succeſs of that Operation? When there had not been at that Time one Inſtance from the Creation

tion of the World, of a Perſon's Seeing that had been born blind; *Since the World began was it not heard, that any Man opened the Eyes of one that was born blind* *. How our SAVIOUR ſhould be poſſeſs'd of a Piece of Knowledge which no Body has ever had either before or ſince his Time, and is confeſs'd by the *Spinoſiſt* to be a Secret which he pretends not to fathom, is what he ought to give ſome Account of. Till ſuch Time, we have a Right to inſiſt upon it, That thoſe Inſtantaneous Cures our SAVIOUR performed upon the Perſon born blind, upon the Dumb and Deaf, upon the Sick of various Diſtempers, and even upon ſuch as were really dead, ſhould be taken for ſome uncommon Exerciſes of the Power of GOD, and not for any Natural Effects of certain Powers of Nature.

2*dly*, HAVING ſhewn that ſome Miraculous Works mentioned in our *Goſpels*, ſuppoſing them to have been really performed, could not be the Effects

* John IX. 32.

fects of any Powers of Nature, I am now to ſhew, That ſuch Works could not be performed by any Agents inferior to GOD; and for this plain Reaſon, Becauſe ſome of them, as for Inſtance, the raiſing a Body to Life that has been once really dead, requires as great a Power as the giving Life at firſt to ſuch a Body. For, if we can judge at all, it will require as great a Power to reſtore a Piece of Matter to Life again, when that Organization is ſpoiled which was neceſſary to Life, tho' it had been before animated, as to animate any Parcel of Matter, that never had any of the Organs neceſſary for Life. And therefore the ſame Power, which could re-animate a Body that was reduced to an inanimate State, would be ſufficient for animating any Part of Matter whatſoever. But whatever Extraordinary Works may be done, whether *really* or in *appearance*, by any Inviſible Agents inferior to the Supreme BEING, yet ſo long as the *Deiſt* believes him to be the Maker of the World, and of all Things that are contained

tained in it, he cannot believe any Inferiour Beings to have a natural Power, or a Power independent upon GOD, of making any new Species of Animals, or of forming any Individuals out of lifeleſs Matter, of the ſame Species with the preſent ones of GOD's making; becauſe a Power lodged in any Hands different from thoſe of the CREATOR, of encreaſing the Number of Animals in any other way than of His Appointment, would be inconſiſtent with the Oeconomy of the World, and the Fitneſs of Proviſions, both with Regard to the Quantity and Quality of them, for the Uſe of ſuch Animals. For there is no conceiving how there ſhould be ſuch an exact Adjuſtment of Proviſions for the Animate Part of the World, as I have already ſhewn there is *, without ſuppoſing that there was ſome Intelligent BEING, who had calculated what Quantity of Proviſions would be neceſſary for ſupplying the Wants of ſuch a Number of Animals, as He intended

* See Sermon X.

tended ſhould dwell upon the Face of the Earth. And it cannot be ſuppoſed that GOD would furniſh any of his Creatures with a Power of diſturbing his own Plan, and making it unbecoming his Wiſdom to execute.

IF there have been any Inſtances pretended of the Exerciſe of ſuch a Power by inferior Agents without GOD's Aſſiſtance, becauſe in Oppoſition to Him; as in the Caſe of the *Ægyptian* Magicians, and of *Apollonius*'s raiſing a Lady to Life in *Rome* when ſhe was carrying to the Funeral Pile:

I ANSWER, That as to the Inſtance of the Magicians, there is no Evidence that their Performances were more than Deluſory or in Appearance: The Works which they did, as well as *Moſes*, were theſe Two; the turning their Rods into Serpents, and bringing Frogs upon the Land of *Egypt*: Theſe are the only Wonders performed by the *Ægyptians*, that have any Pretence to the making any of the *Animate* Kind: And yet neither of theſe Inſtances will prove, that they had a Power of giving Life

to

to Lifeleſs Matter. For as to the firſt, *viz.* the Converſion of their Rods into Serpents; we have no Reaſon to think that this was a real Change or Converſion into a living Creature; becauſe we find that *Aaron*'s Rod, after it had been at two different Times converted into a Serpent; this ſame Rod, I ſay, was ever after called by the Writer of the Book of *Exodus*, a Rod or Wand, and employed to the Purpoſes of a Rod †, *The Rod which was turned into a Serpent, ſhalt thou take in thine Hand.* and Verſe 17, 'tis employed as a Rod to ſmite upon the Waters; Chap. viii. 16. it was uſed in ſmiting the Duſt of the Land. So as after it had been twice a Serpent, it reſumed its primitive Nature of a Rod, and this too without the Help of any miraculous Change, as far as appears by the Hiſtory; and ſeems to have continued in that State ever after. But however it might have been with *Aaron*'s Rod, yet had the Magicians Converſion of *their* Rod into

† Exodus, Chap. IV. and Chap. VII. v. 15.

to a Serpent, been a real Change, it would be hard to give a Reaſon, why they were not able to form Lice out of the Duſt, as well as a Serpent out of their wooden Wand: For as to the firſt of theſe, the Magicians immediately cry'd, as ſoon as they ſaw it, *That it was the Finger of* GOD, and did not pretend to any Thing like it. And yet no Body will pretend to ſee more Difficulty in animating Duſt than in giving *Life* to a Piece of dead Wood.

As to the ſecond Inſtance, the Scriptures ſay nothing of Frogs being made by the Incantations of the Magicians, but only that they brought them out of the Water upon the Land; which certainly may be done without the Power of forming ſuch Animals as Frogs. The laſt Inſtance is that of *Apollonius* of *Tyana*'s raiſing a Lady to Life that had been carried out for dead. The Account which *Philoſtratus* gives of it, tho' he was well inclined to do all the Honour he could to *Apollonius*, ſhews it to be very doubt-

ful, whether the Lady was really dead or only in a Trance. " For, ſays he, " whether there was any Spark of Life " left in her, which her Phyſicians did " not perceive, or whether ſhe was " really dead, is a Matter of Doubt " not only to me, but was ſuch to " thoſe who were preſent when *Apol-* " *lonius* ſeemed to bring her to Life " again *. And therefore this Inſtance, any more than the former, will never have Weight enough to prove, that any inferior Agents have a Power, independent of GOD, of giving Life, or making new Individuals. Conſequently, it cannot invalidate my Proof of a Divine Miſſion, drawn from the Exerciſe of ſuch a Power as that of giving Life to a dead Body.

IF

* Εἴτε σπινθῆρα τῆς ψυχῆς εὗρεν ἐν αὐτῇ, ὃς ἐλελήθει τοὺς θεραπεύοντας — Εἴτε ἀπεσβεκυῖαν τὴν ψυχὴν ἀνέθαλψέ τε καὶ ἀνέλαβεν, ἄρρητος ἡ κατάληψις τοῦτο γέγονεν, οὐκ ἐμοὶ μόνῳ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς παρατυχοῦσιν. Philoſtrat. de vita Apollonii Tyan. Lib. IV. cap. 45.

IF we may believe Mr. *Bayle* *, *Spinoſa* himſelf acknowledged, if he could have believed the Matter of Fact of *Lazarus*'s being raiſed to Life again, after he had been really dead, that he would have given up his Syſtem of Infidelity, owned our SAVIOUR's Miſſion to have been from GOD, and embraced the Chriſtian Faith. Mr. *Bayle* tells us, That *Spinoſa* confeſſed this to ſome of his moſt intimate Friends. We cannot doubt whether *Spinoſa* had heard of the Account that *Philoſtratus* has given of *Apollonius* raiſing a *Roman* Lady to Life; whether he believed any more of this than he did of our SAVIOUR's raiſing *Lazarus* to Life; yet thus much may be inferred from this Confeſſion of his, which is all I want it for at preſent, That if good Proof could be made of any ſuch Fact, it would be a good Evidence of a Divine Miſſion.

HAVING finiſhed the Proof of Miracles, and ſhewn, That ſome of the Works which our SAVIOUR is ſaid

* Bayle Hiſtor. Dict. voce Spinoſa.

to have done, could not be the Effects of any Powers of Nature, nor of any Agent inferior to GOD,

I AM to ſhew, 2*dly*, That the Diſciples of our LORD were qualified for judging, Whether ſuch Works were really done or not; particularly with Regard to his Reſurrection, that they were able to judge, whether it was *Real*, or only in *Appearance*. For I cannot find that *Spinoſa* doubted, whether the Apoſtles were ſincere Perſons, and ſpoke what themſelves believed to be true. The Objection which *Oldenburg* had made to him upon this Head, and his Anſwer to it, ſuppoſes him ſatisfied of their Sincerity: For thus he ſays *, *At dices Apoſtolos omnes omnino credidiſſe, quod Chriſtus à morte reſurrexerit, quod ego non nego.* And he ſays farther †, "That the Circumſtances of our Saviour's Appearing "to his Diſciples were ſo ſtrong, that he "does not only ſay, that *they* believed "what they reported of his Appearing to "them; but that even *Infidels* would have "thought

* Epiſt. 23. † Ibid. 25.

" thought they had ſeen him, if they had " been preſent in thoſe Places in which " He appeared to his Diſciples." *Fateor quidem hanc viz. Reſurrectionem, iis narrari circumſtantiis, ut negare non poſſimus ipſos Evangeliſtas credidiſſe Chriſti corpus reſurrexiſſe, & quod ab Infidelibus etiam potuiſſet videri, ſi unà in iis locis adfuiſſent in quibus ipſe Chriſtus diſcipulis apparuit.* This I think is ſpeaking fully in Behalf of the Sincerity of our Witneſſes, and of the Motives too of their Belief in the Reſurrection; tho' after all theſe Conceſſions, he will have it, that the Diſciples might be deceived, and take an Appearance for a Truth. I have therefore nothing more to do, but to ſhew from the Circumſtances they give of this Fact, that they could not be deceived as to the Fact of the Reſurrection; that they muſt have been able to diſtinguiſh their real Maſter from his Ghoſt or Apparition.

IN the Morning immediately after the Sabbath was over, certain Women went with Spices to embalm our SAVIOUR's Body; when they came to the

Sepulchre, they found the Stone rolled away, tho' they could not imagine by whom; they went into the Grave, and were in a great Conſternation upon not finding our SAVIOUR's Body there; they went and told this to Two of his Diſciples, who went to the Sepulchre, and found what the Women had told them to be true; no *Body* there, only the Burying-Cloaths to be found. Thus far then muſt be evident to them, That the Body was not in the Sepulchre, whatever was the Cauſe of its Removal: This is a Matter of Fact, of which no Body will deny they might be good Witneſſes: The only Difficulty that can be made, is, Whether the Appearances of our SAVIOUR to his Diſciples were *real*, or only *imaginary*. It muſt be obſerved, from the Account which all our Evangeliſts give of this Matter, that the Diſciples were ſo far from being credulous, or ready to believe that their Maſter was riſen, that they all rejected the Story of the Women, concerning his being riſen to Life, as an idle Tale: They might therefore be

be capable of being good Witneſſes, when they witneſſed *againſt* their Prejudices. But let us ſee what Reaſons prevailed upon them, prejudiced as they were, to believe that He was really riſen; and whether ſuch Reaſons would not have determined any Reaſonable Man to believe as they did. They *ſaw* him at ſeveral Times, knew that *He* was exactly like that Perſon, whom they ſaw t'other Day hanging upon a Croſs: They *heard* him talk often with them, they knew 'twas ſo like their Maſter's Voice, that they did not doubt they as really heard him talk, after He was *dead*, as they had done, while He was *alive*, and as if the Teſtimony of two of their Senſes was not a ſufficient Proof of his being their old Maſter, One of them, *viz. Thomas* was ſo incredulous, that he declared he would not believe it was really his Maſter, unleſs he might not only *ſee* in his Hands the Marks of the Nails, with which the *Jews* had faſtned them to the Croſs, but alſo *thruſt his Fingers into the Holes, and thruſt his Hand into*

his Side, that had been wounded by the Spear. *Thomas* was gratified in all this, and convinced that it was not an Apparition that only counterfeited the Aſpect and Voice of his Maſter, but really and truly his Maſter raiſed to Life again; for by touching and handling his Maſter, he had a farther Evidence that it was his Maſter, and not an Apparition, becauſe ſuch *have not Fleſh and Bones*, as *Thomas* found his Maſter had, and therefore cried out for Joy, *My* LORD, *and my* GOD. He did not appear to his Diſciples once, twice, or thrice, but a great many Times before his Aſcenſion; and theſe Appearances were not ſhort and tranſient, but in ſome of them He ſtaid ſo long with them, as to eat and drink with them; ſo as they had ſufficient Opportunities, and Time enough for examining, whether it was He or not; and at laſt they ſaw the ſame Perſon whom they had ſo often ſeen, parted from them, and aſcending up into Heaven. If after all this Evidence, theſe Witneſſes were deceived, we muſt give up the Teſtimony of the

the Senſes as not to be depended on in any Caſe whatever; and the *Spinoſiſt* might, if he had pleaſed, with as good Reaſon have ſaid, That the Diſciples of our LORD were deceived in believing their Maſter was any Thing more than *a Man in Appearance only* even before Crucifixion; 'till he is pleaſed to tell us what Sort of Evidence he would have inſiſted upon, which the Apoſtles had not.

IT will not be ſufficient to ſay, That I have allowed the Magicians Rods to be only in *Appearance* turned into Serpents, and yet no doubt the Standers by were as fully perſuaded that the Rods were *really* become Serpents, as the Apoſtles were that they ſaw their LORD, when they ſaw his *Apparition*: Becauſe we don't find that the Standers by were difficult in believing the Converſion of the Magicians Rods, and therefore not careful in examining, whether it was ſo or not. Whereas in this Inſtance of the Reſurrection, his Diſciples were averſe to believing it true, and therefore nice in their Examination;

mination; they had ſeveral Opportunities at different Times of ſeeing our SAVIOUR; whereas this Converſion of the Magicians Rod was once made, and quickly deſtroyed by *Aaron*'s Rod, ſo that there was not much Time allowed for examining the Truth of that *Appearance*; and there was no Neceſſity for *Moſes*'s diſcovering that the Change was not *real*; becauſe their Rods being made to diſappear by *Aaron*'s Rod, was a ſufficient Confutation of the Power by which the Magicians acted, altho' the Converſion in both Caſes had been only in *Appearance*.

IF it be ſaid, That had our SAVIOUR really riſen with the ſame Body He laid down in the Grave, the Two Diſciples of his whom He joyned as they were travelling to *Emmaus*, muſt have known him, becauſe they both ſaw him, and had a long Diſcourſe with him. Our Anſwer is, That St. *Mark* tells us, our SAVIOUR appeared to them ἐν ἑτέρᾳ μορφῇ; in a different Dreſs from what thoſe Diſciples had been uſed to ſee him in; as He appeared at another

another Time to *Mary Magdalen* in the Habit of a *Gardiner*. That it often happens that we do not know our moſt intimate Friends, when they have diſguis'd themſelves with a Deſign to be concealed from us; eſpecially if we meet them at a Place or Time, when and where we not only did not expect to ſee them, but were fully perſuaded they were at that Time in another Place; which was plainly the Caſe of the Two Diſciples with Regard to our SAVIOUR: For notwithſtanding the Report the Women had made to them of his being living, they ſeem to have believed nothing of the Matter, and therefore could have no Thoughts of meeting upon the Road a Perſon whom they did not believe to be alive: And then 'tis very poſſible, they might entertain no Suſpicion of its being their *Maſter*, altho' the Perſon they ſaw and converſed with, might very much reſemble him, both in his Aſpect and his Voice. And therefore nothing can be inferred from this Fact, to the Prejudice of a *real* Reſurrection: Nothing

that

that ought to hinder us from concluding, That if after thoſe frequent Occaſions which the Diſciples of our LORD had *of ſeeing Him*, of eating and drinking with Him, of handling Him after his Reſurrection, their Teſtimony of of his being alive might ſtill be falſe; they muſt have been Deceivers, and believed nothing themſelves of the Facts they tell us: But *Spinoſa* has already acquitted them from any Deſign of impoſing upon us; conſequently, our SAVIOUR muſt have *really* riſen again, and not in *Appearance* only: But by *Spinoſa*'s Confeſſion, ſuch a Fact exceeding all the Powers of Nature, muſt have GOD for its Author. Which is enough to ſhew, That ſome uncommon Works may be a good Proof of a Divine Miſſion; and therefore that it cannot be a good Reaſon for refuſing a fair Examination to any Revelation, to plead, That there is no other Way of Proving it *ſuch*, but by ſome Extraordinary or Uncommon Works.

SERM.

SERMON XIII.

1 Cor. I. 21.

For after that, in the Wiſdom of God, *the World by Wiſdom knew not* God, *it pleaſed* God *by the fooliſhneſs of Preaching to ſave them that believe.*

THE Deſign of our Apoſtle in this Chapter was, to mortify ſome Perſons, who at that Time pretended to deſpiſe the Chriſtian Religion, becauſe of its Plainneſs and Simplicity. Beſides many other Exceptions they made againſt it, ſuch as the mean Eſtate

Eſtate of its firſt Author, and his dying ſo much like a common Malefactor, they were not a little offended at it, becauſe its Profeſſors did not give their Doctrines the Air and Turn of the Schools, nor proved them from any of the then admired Principles of Truth; but required Men to take them upon the Credit and Authority of one JESUS, whom they affirmed to have been ſent on Purpoſe by GOD to publiſh them to the World: They expected to have had the Immortality of the Soul, a Reſurrection, and ſuch-like Doctrines made out to them from Principles of Reaſon and *Philoſophy*; for, as the Apoſtle tells us, They *ſought after Wiſdom*, v. 22. with which goodly Title they were wont to dignify their Speculations in *Philoſophy*; but when they found the Apoſtles were Perſons altogether unacquainted with any of their Syſtems, the then reputed Standards of Truth and good Senſe; and that they chiefly inſiſted upon the Authority of their MASTER, they ſlighted their Preaching, as fit only for the Entertainment

tainment of the illiterate and credulous Part of Mankind; the Authority of a Maſter, eſpecially of One that came to ſo bad an End, appeared to them to be no better than Fooliſhneſs, or fooliſh Talking. CHRIST *crucified, to the* Greeks *Fooliſhneſs*, v. 23. As an Anſwer to this Way of Reaſoning, St. *Paul* tells them, That if Chriſtianity was *Fooliſhneſs*, it was only ſuch to thoſe who periſhed by rejecting it; but as to thoſe who embraced it, it was the Power of GOD, and the Wiſdom of GOD: And as a Proof of the Truth of what he ſaid, he bids his *Corinthians* ask theſe vain Men, What they with all their Wiſdom had done towards bringing the World to a true Senſe of Religion, and whether they could ſhew any ſuch Effects of their Inſtructions, as were every Day produced by the Preaching of the Goſpel? *Where is the Wiſe? Where is the Scribe? Where is the Diſputer of this Age? Hath not* GOD *made fooliſh the Wiſdom of this World?* v. 20. Of which he gives an undeniable Inſtance, That after all their Attempts, and all their

boaſted

boasted Wisdom, they were not got so far as to know the Object of their Worship aright; or, allowing some Few of them to have had just Notions of the DEITY, that yet they were never able to propagate any of them among the Rest of the World. And therefore as the Way of Wisdom and Knowledge had not sufficiently answered the Purposes of informing the Bulk of Mankind in their Duty, he tells them, GOD was pleased to proceed with Men after a new Method, and to bring them to Himself and an holy Life, without profound *Knowledge*, in a Way of *Believing*. *For after that, in the Wisdom of* GOD, *the World by Wisdom knew not* GOD, *it pleased* GOD *by the Foolishness of Preaching to save them that believe.*

FROM the *Text* thus explained, I shall take an Occasion of comparing together these two different Ways of Instruction, by Faith, and Reason: And after having established the Reasonableness of submitting to the Instructions of Faith, shew, That this is on many Accounts better fitted for Teaching Men

Men their Duty, and the Principles that enforce it, than Reaſon or *Philoſophy*: And conſequently, tho' the Nature and Will of GOD, as far as is neceſſary to be known, was diſcoverable (as the *Deiſt* ſays) by Natural Light; yet a Revelation might be of great Uſe to Mankind; and therefore ſuch a Method of Inſtruction not unworthy or unbecoming the Wiſdom of GOD.

I HAVE already obſerved, That the Reaſons by which the *Deiſt* pretends to defend himſelf, while he rejects Revelation, without giving it a fair Hearing, are theſe:

1*ſt*, "THAT there is no proving "a Revelation, but by Miracles; and "that Miracles will never prove any "Thing but our own Ignorance.

2*dly*, "THAT if they could be made "to prove Something, they could not "prove a Revelation, becauſe a Reve-"lation would be uſeleſs, and therefore "cannot have GOD for its Author, who "does nothing in vain, or without good "Reaſon.

3*dly*, "BECAUSE there are so ma-
"ny Pretences to Revelation, all of
"them pretending to be supported by
"the Extraordinary Power of GOD,
"that there is no discovering which
"of them is the true one, if any such
"were."

THESE are the Difficulties which hinder him, as he pretends, from believing as we do.

As to the first of these, I have considered it already *. The second Difficulty they support by these two Reasons: 1. "Because Authority cannot be
"a sufficient Ground to form a Ra-
"tional Assent upon. 2. Because what-
"ever is needful to be known in Re-
"ligious Matters, may be found out
"by Reason and Discourse."

I SHALL therefore shew 1*st*, That Authority may be a good Reason for giving our Assent to a Proposition.

2*dly*, THAT a Revelation is better fitted on many Accounts for Teaching Men their Duty, than Reason or *Philosophy*.

* See Serm. XII.

losophy: And therefore that 'tis not unbecoming the Wisdom of GOD to make one.

1*st*, THE Reasonableness of Believing, or the Reasonableness of such a Persuasion, as is entirely built upon Faith or Authority, is to be proved. By a Persuasion formed upon *Faith* or *Authority*, in Distinction from a Persuasion that rests upon *Reason* only; I mean, a Persuasion, That a Proposition is true, altho' our Reason cannot discover any necessary Agreement between the Parts of the Proposition; but believes them to be truly connected, because we are told as much; so as if GOD reveals a Proposition to us, which Natural Reason discovers to be evidently and necessarily true, as He has done in the Moral Law; all such as do evidently perceive it to be true, can't be properly said to take it for a Truth upon Faith, or the Authority of GOD, but upon the Reason and Evidence of the Thing: because where the Proof is clear and evident, the Reason of Assent will be resolved into its Evidence, not into the Authority of the

Perſon who relates it to us for a Truth. And therefore when a certain † Author tells us, "We neither ought, nor "can Aſſent to any Propoſition, till the "Mind does thoroughly underſtand, and "evidently perceive it to be true;" he effectually excludes Authority from being any Reaſon of our Aſſent; it being then only that our Aſſent proceeds from a Principle of Faith, when 'tis given before any ſuch Evidence appears.

GOD had left Mankind, except a very ſmall Part, the *Jews*, almoſt without any other Directions, than what Natural Reaſon could furniſh them with. For excepting ſome few Traditions, ſuch as thoſe concerning the Formation of the Earth, and the Drowning it by a Deluge of Waters, and ſome others, (which too had the uſual Fate of Doctrines conveyed in the Way of Tradition, *viz.* of being ſo confounded with Fable and Story, that to diſcover how much of them was true, what added to the Original Tradition, was near as difficult,

† Chriſtianity not Myſterious.

difficult, as it would have been to have discovered those Truths without the Help of any Tradition;) excepting some few Traditions, whatever they found out, was in a Way of Reason and *Philosophy*, by such Inferences as Reason was able to draw from its own Principles. GOD sent no Prophets amongst them to declare authoritatively what their Duty was, but every one was to find it out as well as he could. Not but that He raised up Great and Learned Men, such as many of the Philosophers in the several Sects were, to be the Interpreters of Duty to the People, and perhaps assisted them too in those great Discoveries they made concerning Himself, and their Duty to Him; but then GOD did all this in a Way of Reason and human Wisdom: They never pretended they had them from GOD, or urged Men to the Belief of them on that Account; the only Arguments they insisted on, were such rational Deductions from the Nature of Things, as Reason and Observation might have furnished them with. But notwithstanding all

their wiſe Inſtructions, and the Diſcoveries made by them concerning the Object of Worſhip; yet we find the Bulk of Mankind made ſmall Improvements under them; for St. *Paul* tells us, the World with all its Wiſdom was not gotten ſo far, as to know the True GOD; and therefore GOD obſerving the ſmall Proficiency Men made under this Sort of Teachers, was pleaſed to take it upon Himſelf to teach Mankind, and free them from the Trouble of Searching what their Duty was, by long and elaborate Deductions from Principles of Reaſon; that now they ſhould rely upon his Credit for ſuch Truths as they wanted to be ſatisfied in; that they ſhould have His Authority for a Proof, inſtead of thoſe tedious, and often Times ſlippery Inferences from Reaſon, or thoſe much more uncertain and ill-grounded Traditions, which were the beſt Means they had of coming at the Knowledge of ſome Truths of the greateſt Importance.

ONE would think that Mankind ſhould have received this Method of being

being Taught by GOD with the greatest Satisfaction, and a due Senſe of their Obligations to GOD their Teacher; that no one ſhould have put Him upon proving what He aſſerted, before they could believe Him; that his Veracity, whom Natural Reaſon diſcovers to be too Wiſe to be impoſed upon *Himſelf*, and too Good to impoſe upon *others*, ſhould have removed all Objections againſt ſuch a Method of Inſtruction: And yet ſome People pretend to aſſure us, That Aſſent given to what we don't thoroughly underſtand, tho' ſupported by the greateſt Authority, is repugnant to the Nature of a Rational Being: That clear and diſtinct Ideas are to the Underſtanding, what Light and a fit *Medium* are to the Eye; and that a Man may as well ſee an Object, when either of theſe are wanting, as the Mind aſſent to any Truth, of which it has not clear and diſtinct Ideas: That Authority, as ſuch, being a Thing foreign to the Propoſition, to which we give our Aſſent, and not making it more intelligible than it was before, cannot

therefore induce a Rational Aſſent; and conſequently, that the Obedience of Faith, and Reſignation of Underſtanding, ſo much talk'd of, are a perfect Contradiction to the Nature of an human Mind.

IF this Objection were juſt, it would not be eaſy to make out what the Apoſtle contends for, *viz.* The Preferableneſs of the Way of *Faith* above that of *Wiſdom*, for the Salvation of Mankind. For, if all Aſſent muſt be reſolved into clear and diſtinct Ideas as the ſole Cauſe of it, and no Man could Aſſent, 'till he had ſuch Ideas; there would be no Room left for Aſſenting upon a Principle of Faith; for, as I before obſerved, all Propoſitions of Faith, properly ſo called, do ſuppoſe that the Perſon to whom they are ſuch, does not thoroughly underſtand them. That all Aſſent muſt be grounded on ſome Kind of Evidence or other, is very certain; and alſo that a Man muſt have a clear and diſtinct Perception of the Senſe of a Propoſition, before he can give any Aſſent to it; otherwiſe he would Aſſent

to

to he knows not what: But then it does not follow that a Man can't give his Aſſent, 'till he is able to find out thoſe Proofs, which ſhew the Connexion and Agreement between the Parts of the Propoſition; for why may not Authority, affirming the Truth of a Propoſition, be a ſufficient Evidence to warrant our Aſſent? 'Tis true, Authority, as *ſuch*, does not help us to underſtand the Propoſition better than we did before; and yet the Opinion we may have of the Perſon's Skill and Veracity, who tells us the Propoſition is true, may be to us, who have this Opinion of him, a probable Evidence of its Truth, and a Rational Ground of Perſuaſion. For no one can doubt, whether a Man may not rationally enough give his Aſſent to the Truth of any one Propoſition in *Euclid*, if he underſtands the Terms of it, altho', being unacquainted with that Science, he may not be able to demonſtrate it; and yet the *only* Ground of his Aſſent, in ſuch Caſe, would be the Authority of ſome Perſon, whom he believed

believed able to do it. For the ſame Reaſon, tho' we are far from having any clear and diſtinct Ideas of a Reſurrection, and can ſee no Connexion between our dying and riſing to Life again, yet we may Aſſent to this Propoſition, That the Dead ſhall live again, if we be once ſatisfied that the Perſon who tells us it ſhall be ſo, is a Lover of Truth, and able to connect the Parts of this Propoſition. And therefore a clear and diſtinct Underſtanding of a Truth, cannot be previouſly neceſſary to every Aſſent of the Mind of Man.

IF we ſhould alſo conſider the limited Nature of our Faculties, that they fall vaſtly ſhort of reaching the whole Extent of Being; that there are few Things about which we can certainly determine; many Truths of great Importance to us, for which in a Way of Reaſon we ſhould want evident Proofs; that there are many more, which the Generality of Mankind would ſcarce be capable of underſtanding, for want of Skill to uſe ſuch Proofs as

Reaſon

Reaſon diſcovers: Conſidering all this, one might think it no Injury done to any Man's Underſtanding, if he receiv-ed theſe Truths in a more *certain*, and much *eaſier* Way, as I ſhall preſently ſhew, from the Eternal Fountain of Knowledge. For no Body, I think, would blame a Perſon who was ſenſible of a Defect in his Eye-ſight, for believing the Report of another upon the Subject of *Seeing*, if he thought him to be an honeſt Man, and to have better Eyes than himſelf; and yet the Report of ſuch a Perſon does not help him to *ſee* the Thing better, than he did before. But,

2*dly*, I PROCEED to ſhew ſome of the Advantages of this Way of Teach-ing the World by Faith, above that of Reaſon: As,

1*ſt*, UPON account of its Certainty. Whilſt Mankind was left to the Dire-ctions of Natural Reaſon, we meet with nothing but Uncertainty and Ir-reſolution about Truths of the higheſt Concern; they were perpetually Diſ-puting about the *Origin* of the World, ſome

ſome contending it owed its Original to a lucky jumbling together of the Parts of Matter: Others, That beſides Matter, there was another Principle, *viz.* Mind, that actuated Matter, and raiſed it into that beautiful Order we now ſee it in. Others not ſeeing how the many Goods and Evils that lie every where ſo intermixed, could, being ſo contrary in their Natures, proceed from the ſame Principle, concluded, That beſides Matter, there muſt be Two other Principles, One the Author of all the Good, and the Other of all the Evil in the World. Nor were they leſs at a Loſs about the Government of the World; one, and that no inconſiderable Sect of Philoſophers, leaving it to the Guidance of *Chance*; others to *Fate* or *Neceſſity*; and others to a GOD or *Free Agent*. The Generality of Men were under great Uncertainty as to their Forgiveneſs, after their having offended the DEITY. Some hoped their Concern for having done ſo, and a Reſolution to behave better for the future, would be ſufficient to make their Peace with GOD;

GOD; but the greateſt Part would not truſt to this, without adding a Vicarious Death, as an Atonement for their Faults: But whether either, or both of them, would be accepted, was more than Reaſon could inform them; becauſe it could not appear that GOD was obliged by any of his Perfections to accept of either or of both; and ſuch Things as depend upon his Will, and are Acts of Bounty or Favour, cannot be known 'till He pleaſes to reveal them. If we look into their Debates concerning the Happineſs which GOD deſigned Man for, we ſhall find them at a great Loſs where to fix it; however, they generally look'd no farther for it than on this Side the Grave, many of them denying any Reward beyond this Life, and the reſt very much doubting it; ſo as St. *Paul* might juſtly charge the *Gentile* World with not knowing the True GOD. For tho' ſome of them had very juſt and honourable Notions of GOD, and did diſcover there was a Great and Good BEING, that at firſt made, and does ſtill govern the World; yet they could

could not, neither was it likely that they ſhould, perſuade the reſt of the World to be of *their* Mind. Becauſe there were ſome Objections which *then* lay againſt this Suppoſition, for which Reaſon was unable to account; as for Inſtance, They could never give any Man a ſatisfactory Account of the many Evils, both Moral and Natural, that were too viſible in the World; or reconcile them with the Suppoſal of a Good and Gracious BEING at the Helm of our Affairs; becauſe they knew nothing of the happy State of the firſt Parents of Mankind; and that they were deprived of it for an Act of wilful Diſobedience, and that our Mortality, with all the Conſequences attending ſuch a State, is an Effect of their Miſmanagement *. For as to the pre-exiſtent State, which was the beſt Account they were able to give of this Difficulty, no Proof could be made of it; and therefore thoſe who would not take up their Opinions upon truſt, choſe to aſcribe the

* Rom. v. 19.

the Government of the World to Fate, or any Thing rather than GOD, upon whoſe Goodneſs they thought it would highly reflect, if He had created a Rational Being with ſuch a Biaſs to Evil, and placed it in ſo uncomfortable an Habitation. The Difficulties attending ſome Religious Truths in a Way of Reaſon, ſeem to have determin'd ſome of them to the Way of propoſing their Sentiments as Matters diſputable; in which Manner the *Academy* proceeded with their Scholars. They declared againſt all Dogmatical Determinations in Matters of Religion, and contented themſelves with examining the ſeveral Pretences of others, without eſtabliſhing any Opinion of their own upon more than *probable* Grounds. Thus we find *Cicero* who was one of the Learnedeſt among them, engaging the ſeveral Sects of Philoſophers in a Diſpute about the Nature of the Gods, expoſing in their Turns the Weakneſs of each of them, and at laſt refuſing, tho' deſired by *Cotta*, to tell us, what himſelf thought of the

the Subject *. We have then the moſt conſiderable Man of a Sect remarkable for Men of Abilities, at a Time too when Learning and good Senſe were at the higheſt Pitch in *Greece* and *Rome*, tacitly giving up the Cauſe of Reaſon and *Philoſophy*, as inſufficient to *inſure* any Man in Truths concerning GOD and Religion.

WHAT then could the reſt of the World do, when their greateſt Men were ſo much divided in theſe Matters? eſpecially when thoſe who had the moſt *Truth* on their Sides, made the leaſt Pretences to *Certainty*; we may eaſily imagine that but Few, and thoſe of very inquiſitive Tempers, would give themſelves the Trouble of entring into their Speculations, that the reſt of the World would ſlight their Lectures, as deſpairing to find where the Truth lay, when *they* were ſo much divided about it. And ſo it proved; their Diviſions did ſo weaken their Authority, and the Influence which otherwiſe they muſt

* Vide Lib. 3. Ad finem, de Natura Deorum.

must have had, that altho' many of them were convinced of the Unity of the DEITY themſelves, they were never able to ſtop the Progreſs of *Polytheiſm*, or oblige the Government of any one State in the World, to ſet up the Worſhip of the One True GOD. They were ſo little able to reform Mankind in this Particular, that in St. *Paul*'s Time their Diſciples (the *Heathen* World) ſtill went on in their old Way of Worſhip; *In changing the Glory of the incorruptible* GOD, *into an Image made like to corruptible Man, and to Birds, and Four-footed Beaſts, and Creeping Things* *. Whereas when GOD Himſelf undertook to teach the World in a Way of Faith, all Wavering and Irreſolution concerning his Nature and Will, quickly vaniſh'd. The Apoſtles were well agreed in publiſhing the ſame Doctrines, and propoſed them to their Hearers as certain Truths; and thoſe that gave in their Names heartily to this New Inſtitution, left off all Diſputes of this Kind, and adhered ſted-

* Rom. i. 23.

dily to what the Apoſtles taught them; being fully perſuaded that what they taught them was the Truth: The good Effects of this Agreement quickly appeared in the wonderful Succeſs they had in Propagating the Chriſtian Doctrine; *Polytheiſm* and *Idolatry* being forced every where to give Place to the Worſhip of the One True GOD, which in a very few Centuries became the eſtabliſhed Worſhip of almoſt the *then* known World. And tho' the firſt Preachers of this Way lay under great Diſadvantages, as being of a Nation that the *Greeks* and *Romans* look'd upon as little better than barbarous, tho' they were not verſed in the Ways of Reaſoning, and the Arts of Perſuaſion, that were then moſt likely to have recommended their Doctrines; yet when the World came to conſider the Strength of that Evidence, which they brought in Proof of them, and from thence ſaw plainly that Truth was to be found amongſt them, which the endleſs Diſputes and Wranglings of their great Men had forbidden them to expect,

they

they quickly came over to them, quitted all their old Engagements in Favour of the Religion of their Country, and ſubmitted *themſelves* to their Inſtructions; which was more than the Philoſophers, thoſe great Maſters of Reaſoning, and who ſo well underſtood the Art of managing Mens Paſſions, could ever effect. For, whatever Repute their Schools might have as fit Places for Teaching Men the Rules of human Wiſdom; yet it is plain from the Multitude of their Oracles, and the frequent Recourſe that was had to them upon all Occaſions, that the World did not think their Reaſonings in Matters of Religion were much to be depended on, and that Faith was a much more certain Principle of Truth.

PERHAPS it may be thought I have uſed an Argument that may be turned upon me, and upon that Faith which 'tis brought to defend, becauſe it does not appear that there has ever been any better Agreement in *Opinions* among Chriſtians, than there was among Heathens; and therefore if the

great Diverſity of *Opinions* amongſt them, be a good Argument to prove the *Uncertainty* they were in, then as great a Difference amongſt Chriſtians, ought in all Reaſon to inferr as great an *Uncertainty*; that the Hiſtories of paſs'd and preſent Times, and the large Catalogues of Hereſies that are given us by *Epiphanius*, *Philaſtrius* and others do abundantly ſhew, that the Diſputes between Chriſtians concerning Articles of Religion, come not ſhort of thoſe among Heathens. That tho' the Authority of Scripture be granted, yet the World is never the nearer to an Agreement in the Articles of Religion, as is plain by the infinite Number of *Commentaries* upon the ſame Scriptures, and the conſtant Appeal of all Sects of Chriſtians, how oppoſite ſoever in their Opinions, to the ſame Holy Writings: and therefore the Way of Faith ſeems not to have any great Advantages above that of Reaſon on the Score of *Certainty*.

IN Anſwer to this, it may be ſaid, That as to the Catalogues of Hereſies given

given us by the Ancients, they were not much to be relied upon; that many of them were concerning Matters of ſmall Conſequence, and not belonging to the Eſſence of Religion, as appears by the Catalogues themſelves; and the Writers of thoſe Times obſerve, That People were then very forward in making unfair Repreſentations of their Adverſaries Opinions, and calling every Opinion that differed from their own, by the odious Title of Hereſy. That if Chriſtians did differ about the Senſe of ſome Places of Scripture that contained Articles of Importance, ſuch as thoſe which concerned the *Incarnation of the Word in the Perſon of our* SAVIOUR, a TRINITY in *Unity*, and ſome other difficult Doctrines; that yet as to thoſe Articles in which I have charged the Heathens with being very much divided, ſuch as thoſe concerning the MAKER and GOVERNOR of the World, whether there was any one Intelligent BEING to whom theſe Titles did of Right belong: If there was, whether He had made any Proviſion in ſome

other State for ſuch as had ſerved Him faithfully, tho' imperfectly n *this:* As to any of theſe Articles, the Diſputes among ſuch as profeſſed the Chriſtian Religion were always exceeding few, if compared with thoſe amongſt the Heathens: And no Chriſtian Sect of any Note at this Time, denies any of them. That theſe are of all others Truths of the greateſt Concern, as without which there could be no ſufficient Reaſon for ſerving GOD at all; for he that cometh to GOD, muſt believe theſe two Things; *that He is*, and that He is a *Rewarder of them that ſeek Him*. That the Belief of the other Doctrines of Religion is chiefly required of us for this very End, that our Faith in *theſe* might be more firm and better grounded; and therefore an Agreement amongſt Chriſtians, ſo much wanted among ſuch as were under the Guidance of *Natural Light*, tho' it were to be found only in *theſe* Truths; yet if we conſider the Importance of them to Religion, would ſufficiently prove a *Revelation* to be better qualified for

Teaching

Teaching Mankind the Principles and Motives to Duty, than *Reason* or *Philosophy*.

HOWEVER, supposing that by Deductions made from Principles of Reason, the wiser and more intelligent Part of the World could have arrived at as great *Certainty*, and been as well agreed in these Articles I have now mentioned, as we Christians are by the Help of Revelation; yet still the Way of Faith would be much more effectual towards a general Instruction of the World, than that of Reason; because a Revelation teaches in a Method that is better suited to the different *Opportunities* and *Apprehensions* of Men. And that

1*st*, BECAUSE its Way of Teaching is much shorter and more compendious than that of Reason, therefore better fitted for the different Opportunities of Men.

2*dly*, BECAUSE 'tis more easy and more intelligible; consequently, better suited to the different Degrees of Understanding among Men.

1*ſt*, BECAUSE its Method of Teaching is ſhorter. If we conſider the State of Mankind, we may obſerve that much the greateſt Part are given up to Labour, and enſlaved to a mean Condition, almoſt all their Time and Pains laid out in making the neceſſary Proviſions for Life. And therefore if we would undertake to teach ſuch Perſons their Duty, we muſt uſe the ſhorteſt Method with them that's poſſible *; but if we compare together the different Ways of Proof from *Reaſon* and from *Faith*, we ſhall eaſily obſerve that any Truth will be much ſooner learnt, when 'tis proved by an Argument drawn from *Faith*, than the ſame Truth would be by *Reaſon*; for if we would learn any Thing in the Way of Arguing from Principles of *Reaſon*, we muſt be oftentimes content to go Step by Step thro' ſeveral Conſequences, before we can arrive at our Concluſion; eſpecially if the Truths we would underſtand, be of a Complex Nature, ſuch as are thoſe which

* Origen contra Celſum. Lib. 1. p. 9.

which concern our Duty. For before we can underſtand our Obligation to any of the Moral Laws by *Reaſon*, we muſt conſider our own Natures, and obſerve the natural Tendencies of Things; and from theſe inferr our Obligations. As for Inſtance; If I would underſtand whether I am obliged to be juſt in my Dealings, *Reaſon* would diſcover it to be ſo, becauſe Man is naturally made for Society, and can't live with tolerable Comfort without it; and the World is ſo ordered, that unleſs juſt and fair Dealings were obſerved, no Society could poſſibly be kept up, but would quickly end in Tumult and Confuſion: From thence I would conclude, That ſince GOD had made Juſtice ſo neceſſary to the Well-being of Mankind, that He intended Men ſhould practice this Virtue; to underſtand our Obligation to this, or any other Duty in a Way of Faith, nothing more is neceſſary, than ſeeing what the Scriptures, which are the Word of GOD, determine in this Matter. There we may preſently learn what our Duty is, by

applying

applying what the Scriptures ſay, to our own Caſe, and diſcover at one View what Reaſon can't make evident to us, 'till it has put us to the Trouble of ranging our Thoughts, and obſerving the Relation and Dependence they have one upon another. This is none of the leaſt Advantages which Faith has above Reaſon, that it inſtructs us in ſo compendious a Method, that there is no Man, let his Circumſtances be never ſo ſtrait, but may find Time enough to learn his Duty.

2dly, As Faith teaches us in a ſhorter Way, ſo in a more intelligible one, and which is therefore better fitted for the different Degrees of Underſtanding amongſt Men. Whilſt there was no other Way of Teaching the World but by Natural Reaſon, we find the wiſer Heathens were ſo ſenſible of the Difficulty of Teaching Men their Duty, that they would conſtantly run thro' a Courſe of the difficult Parts of Knowledge, with their Scholars, before they could think them capable of learning *Morality*. The *Epicureans* required the

Knowledge

Knowledge of Natural Things, the *Platoniſts* ſome Skill in the *Mathematicks*, as a Preparatory to their *Ethical* Lectures. They found by Experience how little the Generality of the World could apprehend them, when they were Reaſoning concerning the Supreme BEING, and their ſeveral Duties to Him, and therefore generally agreed in excluding the Bulk of Mankind from a Poſſibility of attaining to any great Degrees of Virtue; looking upon ſuch only as capable of Virtue, who were furniſhed with good Natural Abilities, and had enjoyed the Benefits of a liberal Education; but as to all the reſt of the World, we find *Seneca* ranking them among the Beaſts that periſh; ſo as by their own Confeſſion, the Way of *Reaſon* could never have done much towards bringing the World to a Senſe of their Duty, when they ſhut out the greateſt Part of it from a Capacity of receiving Benefit by it. And 'tis eaſy to obſerve, that the Generality of Men are hardly capable of any other Notices of Things, than what are impreſs'd by

by the Objects of Senſe; they have not Skill enough to compare ſimple Terms ſo exactly with one another, as to compound them into true Propoſitions, and then to inferr from every Propoſition its Natural Conſequences and Deductions; nor when they are made for them, always to ſee the Connexion and Force of the Argument. An Argument that ſtrikes their Senſes ſhall much more effectually convince them of any Truth, than any the moſt exact and elaborate Reaſonings upon it: And therefore the Miracles performed by our SAVIOUR and his Apoſtles, did quickly draw the Multitude after them, and in a little Time brought them in more Diſciples, than the abſtruſe Speculations of the Philoſophers had ever done before. For every Man is able to judge whether a blind Man had been reſtored to his Sight; whether the Deaf to their Hearing, and whether the Dead had been raiſed to Life again; Senſe being the proper Judge in theſe Caſes, and then any Man, that had either ſeen or heard of ſuch Things done, would

would naturally draw the ſame Concluſion from them, as the poor Man in the *Goſpel* did, when cured of his blindneſs, that the Perſon who had perform'd that Cure muſt be one that came with Power from above; *If this Man were not of* GOD *he could do nothing* *. Thus far every Man will be able to Reaſon, let his Underſtanding be never ſo mean or ſhallow. The Advantages of a Revelation for teaching Men their Duty would be farther ſeen, by comparing the Practice of Preaching the Religion to the People, as 'tis done in our Churches, with the Lectures of the Philoſophers, or the Inſtructions of *Pagan* Prieſts: Which will be done in the following Diſcourſe.

IN the mean Time this Obſervation naturally ariſes from the Whole, That all Endeavours of undermining Revelation, and weakning its Authority, are direct Attempts upon the Good and Happineſs of Mankind; ſince the deſtroying its Credit, is bringing the World

* John ix. 33.

World back again to the Inſtructions of Natural Reaſon, which how little qualified it is for an Univerſal Guide, we have already ſeen. And therefore, before any undertake to run-down Revelation, I would beg of them to conſider a few Things; That they would look back upon former Times, thoſe Times of Ignorance, which GOD is ſaid to have wink'd at; I would deſire them to reflect upon the extravagant Superſtitions, and abſurd Rites that made the greateſt Part of the Eſtabliſhed Worſhip of the Heathen Nations, and then I would ask them, Whether it was not greatly for the Honour and Happineſs of Mankind, to be reſcued from ſuch Errors as were a Reproach and Scandal to human Nature; and to have a Rational Worſhip and Religion in the Room of 'em? And whether 'tis not highly probable, that if the Credit of Revelation were once deſtroyed, the World would in a few Ages return to as bad a State as that in which Chriſtian Religion found it? I am ſure they can't bring any good

Arguments

Arguments to prove it would not be ſo; and tho' it muſt be confeſſed, that notwithſtanding Revelation, the World is ſtill bad enough; yet if we compare the Hiſtories of the Times that were before, with thoſe that ſucceeded, we ſhall ſoon ſee that it has been much improved by it; as might be ſhewn in the many irrational Cuſtoms, and obſcene Rites of Worſhip (ſuch as thoſe paid to the *Mother* of the *Gods* *) that have been aboliſhed in the ſeveral Nations, where *It* has been received; when the Preachers of Natural Religion could never prevail with the People to part with any of them.

FROM hence too we may obſerve, That the Unbeliever cannot be ſafe from the Apprehenſions of Puniſhment in a future State, while he has no better Arguments for rejecting our Chriſtian Revelation, than pleading the Difficulty of ſeeing what Uſe a Revelation could be of to Mankind.

SERM.

* Vide Aug. de Civitate Dei. Lib. 2. cap. 4, & 5.

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SERM.

* Vide Aug. de Civitate Dei. Lib. 2. cap. 4. &c.

SERMON XIV.

1 Cor. I. 21.

For after that, in the Wiſdom of God, *the World by Wiſdom knew not* God, *it pleaſed* God *by the fooliſhneſs of Preaching to ſave them that believe.*

THE Want of a Revelation has been proved from the Uncertainty in which Mankind was, with regard to ſuch Truths as it nearly concern'd every Body to know. Such as theſe; Whether there were any Supreme Intelligent Being that took no-

tice of the Actions and Behaviour of Men; and whether, ſuppoſing ſuch an one, He would forgive Mens voluntary Miſtakes, upon their being ſincerely concern'd for them, and reſolving to do better for the future; and whether He deſigned to take any farther notice of them after they were once dead, by reſtoring them to Life again, and Rewarding or Puniſhing them for their Behaviour here. As to all theſe, I have already ſhewn, That the World laboured under great Uncertainties. I have alſo proved the Inſufficiency of Reaſon for reſcuing Mankind from this Uncertainty, and for inſtructing them in their Duty, from the Conſideration of thoſe different Ranks and Orders ſeen amongſt Men: That the lower Order, which is the Generality of Men, is enſlaved to a mean Condition, that ſuch a Condition will not allow Time ſufficient for Speculation, or for conſidering in a Way of *Reaſon* what their Duty was. That in a Way of *Authority* Mens Duty might be made much more eaſy and intelligible to them than by *Reaſon* or *Philoſophy*.

Philoſophy. I am further to prove the Uſefulneſs of a Revelation by one Method of Teaching Men their Duty *peculiar* to it, which is, By Preaching that Religion in mix'd Aſſemblies, where Perſons of all Degrees may meet, and receive Inſtruction by that which the vain Philoſophers in my *Text* called the *Fooliſhneſs of Preaching.*

I AM not obliged to conſider, Whether under Natural Religion the World might not have been better taught than they were, in Virtue of ſuch Principles as Natural Reaſon might have ſuggeſted to them; tho' I have already ſhewn *, That Morality could not be explained ſo familiarly in a Philoſophical Lecture, as it is in our *Homilies* or Diſcourſes to the People; but whether in Fact, after a Trial of Four or Five Thouſand Years, they did hit upon ſo good a Method of Reforming the World, as this of Preaching, which was introduced among us by *Revelation.* The Excellency of this In-

* See Serm. XIII.

ſtitution will eaſily appear, if we conſider it as inviting all Sorts of Perſons to come and be Hearers; and alſo the Number of Places which have been uſually ſet apart for the Performance of this Religious Exerciſe. I have already obſerved, That only Perſons of Letters or of a liberal Education, pretended to go to the Schools of the Philoſophers, but now all Ranks of Men, the loweſt and moſt indigent of the People, all Ages, the Old as well as the Young, Women as well as Men, have always had a free Acceſs to theſe Schools for the Education of a Chriſtian, I mean our Churches. And if the Schools of Philoſophers had made their *Lectures* as intelligible as our *Sermons*; yet it muſt be conſidered that their Diſcourſes, ſo far as Religion was concerned in them, were merely *Ethical*, regarding Mens Behaviour towards one another, without concerning themſelves to tell the People the Manner of Reverence or Worſhip, that would be moſt agreeable to the Supreme BEING; they none

of

of them approved any of the then eſtabliſhed Ways of Addreſſing the Divine BEING, and had not Courage enough to teach their Scholars any other, only in general Terms, That the beſt Way of Worſhipping Him, was to imitate Him, and that they told them was beſt done by ſtudying and obſerving his Laws; which was, in other Words, nothing more than perſuading them to obſerve Moral Duties on account of their *Beauty* and *Excellency*, as being a Tranſcript of the Divine Nature; without preſſing upon their Diſciples the Practice of Morality upon any *Religious* Motives, ſuch as the Hopes of GOD's Favour, and the Fear of his Diſpleaſure; without telling them, they muſt practice Virtue, becauſe GOD would reward them for ſo doing, and puniſh them if they did otherwiſe. Accordingly we find ſome of the Fathers of the Church reproaching the *Pagans* with this unlawful Divorce which *their* Philoſophers had made of *Religion* from *Morality*. "The *Pagan Philoſophy*, ſays

Lactantius *, " and *Religion*, are Two " Things quite diſtinct one from the " other; *Morality* has its particular Do- " ctors, (meaning the Philoſophers) " who do not teach the Manner of " approaching the Gods." So that had the Lectures read in their Schools, been more intelligible than our Sermons, yet this *Inſtitution* would have been inferiour to our *Preaching*, as one great Branch of Religion, *viz.* The Manner of Addreſſing to GOD in Religious Worſhip, together with the only ſolid Supports of a Virtuous Life, *viz.* A Religious Fear of the DEITY, were not taught by *them*.

AND as to the Heathen Prieſts, whoſe peculiar Buſineſs it was to teach the People how to behave towards GOD; theſe, I ſay, made no Diſcourſes to the People concerning their

* Philoſophia & religio Deorum diſjuncta ſunt, ſi quidem alij ſunt profeſſores ſapientiæ per quos utique ad Deos non aditur. Alij Religionis antiſtites, per quos ſapere non diſcitur. Lactant. Inſtitut. Lib. 4. cap. 3.

their Duty to their Neighbour; they never gave themſelves the Trouble to teach Men the Rules of Virtue; but ſpent their Time in performing Sacrifical Rites, and certain Ceremonies of their Religion, and in inſtructing People to follow the preſcribed Formulary of external Devotion. "Thoſe (ſays "*Lactantius* *) who teach the Wor- "ſhip of the Gods, take no Notice of "any Thing that may ſerve to regu- "late Manners and the Conduct of "Life, they do not in the leaſt ſearch "after Truth, but apply themſelves "only to learn the Ceremonies of Di- "vine Worſhip, which require nothing "but the Miniſtry of the Body, and "in which the Sentiments of the Heart "have no Part." And in another Place †, "Religion has likewiſe its "Miniſters, who do not teach the

* Nihil ibi diſſeritur quod proficiat ad mores excolendos vitamque formandam, nec habet inquiſitionem aliquam Veritatis; ſed tantummodo ritum colendi, qui non Officio mentis, ſed miniſterio corporis conſtat. Inſtitut. Lib. 4. cap. 3.

† Ibidem.

"Rules of Morality." St. *Auſtin* * has a Paſſage to the ſame Purpoſe, in which he challenges the *Heathens* to ſhew "any ſuch Places as our Church-"es, where the Precepts of the Mo-"ral Law are uſually read by the "Prieſts, and heard by the People, "which, he tells them, is the Caſe "wherever the Chriſtian Religion pre-"vails."

WE have no Reaſon to think theſe Fathers have wronged the Heathen Prieſts, if we conſider that *they* could not with any Decency pretend to have given the People any Leſſons of Morality; becauſe they muſt have ſounded very ill from the Mouths of ſuch Perſons as were obliged, if they would talk conſiſtently with the Principles of that Religion, to give ſuch frightful Ideas

* Dicatur in quibus locis hæc docentium Deorum ſolebant præcepta recitari, & a cultoribus eorum populis frequenter audiri, ſicut nos oſtendimus ad hoc Eccleſias inſtitutas, quaquaverſum Religio Chriſtiana Diffunditur. Lib. 2. cap. 6. De Civitate Dei.

Ideas of the Divinity, aſcribe to it ſo many groſs Imperfections, Weakneſſes, and even Vices, as would be abhorred by any Man that had but a moderate Senſe of Honeſty.

BUT farther, if we conſider the Number of Places ſet apart for the Performance of this Religious Exerciſe, we ſhall ſtill find the Advantages to lie on the Side of a Revelation; theſe Places are to be met with, not only in Cities and great Towns, but even in the meaneſt Villages, by which a Proviſion is made for the Countryman, as well as the Citizen, that he may be taught his Duty, and well skilled in his Religion, without ſtirring out of the Bounds of his Village or Pariſh. Whereas the Schools of the Philoſophers were very few, and thoſe in Places only where there was on *other* Accounts a great Reſort; they were not enough diſperſed, as our Churches have been from the Beginning of Chriſtianity, for the general Inſtruction of Mankind; ſo that had their Lectures been as plain as our Sermons, the greateſt

greateſt Part of the World could not have reſorted to them, by reaſon of the Diſtance they lived from thoſe Schools: The lower Sort of People not having Time from their Trades and Employments, to travel far for Inſtruction. I cannot forbear tranſcribing the Words of the moſt Learned Dr. *Prideaux* in his *Connexion* * upon this Occaſion. "As the *Jews*, ſays he, had their Synagogues, in which the Law and the "Prophets were read unto them every "Sabbath Day, ſo the Chriſtians had "their Churches, in which from the "Beginning all the Doctrines and Duties of their Religion were every "Lord's Day taught, inculcated and "explained to them; and by GOD's "Bleſſing upon this Method, chiefly "was it, that this Holy Religion ſtill "bore up againſt all Oppreſſions, and "notwithſtanding the Ten Perſecutions "and all other Artifices and Methods "of Cruelty and Oppreſſion, which "Hell and Heatheniſm could deviſe to "ſuppreſs

* Connexion, Part 1. pag. 309.

"ſuppreſs it, grew up and increaſed "under them; which *Julian the Apo-* "*ſtate* was ſo ſenſible of, that when "he put all his Wits to work to find "out new Methods for reſtor i ngthe "Heathen Impiety, he could not think "of any more effectual for this Pur- "poſe than to employ his Philoſophers "to preach it up every Week to the "People, in the ſame Manner as the "Miniſters of the Goſpel did the "Chriſtian Religion *." The Uſe that I would make of this Paſſage is, To ſhew, what Opinion one of the ſubtileſt, as well as moſt malicious Adverſaries, that ever the Chriſtian Religion met with, had of this Way of doing Service to any Religion, by Preaching it to the People, as 'tis done in our Churches. Which is a ſufficient Anſwer to ſuch of our Unbelievers, as will not allow it poſſible for a Revelation to be of any Uſe or Service to Mankind.

BUT

* Gregory Nazianzen Oratio contra Julianum.

BUT then, if a Revelation be really of ſuch Uſe to Mankind, it may be ask'd, Why there have not been more Preachers of it, ſo that all the World might have had the Benefit of it? and in particular, Why the Chriſtian Religion was confined to the *Roman* Empire, or at leaſt not extended much farther? That as GOD is acknowledged to be the Common FATHER of All, and no Reſpecter of Perſons or Nations, if this Religion had GOD for its Author, it would have been communicated to the *Upper* as well as the *Lower Aſia*, to the *Chineſe* and *Tartars*, as well as to thoſe Parts of *Aſia* which were in the *Roman* Empire, or bordering upon it; to the *large* Continent of *America*, as well as to the ſmaller one of *Europe*. The Want of ſuch an Univerſality, has been urged by a late Author †, as a ſufficient Reaſon for Rejecting any Revelation, tho' it comes recommended by every other Proof that can be deſired; and for this Reaſon, That

† Blount's Miſcellanies, *put out by* Gildon.

" That if no one Revelation has been " *equally* made known to All, that none " can be wanting or needful to *any*. " And then, there being no real Want " of a Revelation, there can be no " Reaſon for expecting any other Light " from GOD, than what He commu- " nicated to us when He gave us our " Reaſoning Faculty, as He does no- " thing in vain, or gives any *extraor-* " *dinary* Powers, when the *ordinary* ones " are ſufficient."

I HAVE already ſhewn, That a Revelation was wanting on ſeveral Accounts; and therefore am only obliged to ſee, whether a partial Revelation be as good an Argument to prove that ſuch a Religion cannot come from GOD, as any Miracles or extraordinary Works would be to prove that it muſt come from Him. That the firſt cannot be ſo good an Argument to *invalidate* a Revelation, as the latter is to *confirm* it, is evident, becauſe we are ſure 'tis inconſiſtent with the Nature of GOD to exerciſe his Power in ſo extraordinary as Manner, as is that of a Miracle,

racle, in Behalf of a Falſhood, (which muſt be the Caſe, if a *falſe* Religion was ſupported by true Miracles *) as 'tis impoſſible that a BEING, whoſe Character is that of a Lover of Truth, ſhould, conſiſtently with its own Nature, countenance an Impoſture or Falſhood. Whereas we are ſo far from ſeeing any Inconſiſtence with the Nature of GOD, altho' a Religion ſhould be communicated to ſome, and not to others, that ſuch Communications appear to be mere Matters of Favour, which may be granted or refuſed, without affecting any Moral Attribute of GOD: And then the Argument drawn from the former cannot be depended upon; becauſe there is nothing for it but the Will and Pleaſure of a BEING, who was not at all reſtrained from acting either Way; whereas the latter depends upon his Nature, which is neceſſarily what it is; and therefore the Acts flowing from it as incapable of Change, as the Nature itſelf from which they flow. But, 2dly,

* See Sermon XII.

2dly, SUPPOSING it was not a Matter of mere Favour; yet if it was to be communicated at ſome Time or other to all Nations, and any Reaſon could be given, why not to all at the *ſame* Time, then no Argument could be drawn from the partial Preaching of the Chriſtian Religion, which would affect its Divinity. But,

1ſt, ALTHO' when we conſider the Uncertainty Mankind was in with Regard to the Will of GOD, we might have believed that GOD of his Goodneſs would, ſome Time or other, make Himſelf better known to us, yet it would be a Favour in Him to go out of the common Courſe of his Providence for any of our Advantages. The Light of Reaſon He had given us for our Direction, and if that ſhone but *darkly*, yet if GOD would have been merciful to ſuch as made the beſt Uſe of that *dim Light*, neither his Juſtice nor Goodneſs could have been called in queſtion, tho' He had not made any *extraordinary* Communications of his Will to Mankind. We can be grateful in owning the Advantages

vantages we *Christians* have above *Heathens* (in as much as we are assured of Forgiveness of our Sins on Account of the meritorious Death of our SAVIOUR, of which the *Heathen* could not be certain) without presuming to say, that GOD could not, consistently with his Attributes, have remitted our Offences, and will still forgive those, who never had the Gospel Preached to them, without the Knowledge of such an Atonement. We freely own the Advantages of Faith or Revelation for a general Instruction of the World, and yet will not say that GOD has left himself without a Witness in the heathen World: that it was possible for Men to find out the main Strokes of their Duty, and to hope that GOD would pardon upon Repentance, is Evident from many of the Heathen Writers upon Morality. If others of meaner Capacities, and whose Opportunities of Improvement were less, could not strike out their Duty in a way of Reason; this plainly shews that GOD was not obliged to give all Men equal Abilities for understanding *Natural* Religion,

ligion, and therefore it can never be a good Argument againſt a *Revealed* Religion, ſhould any one argue, That 'tis not from GOD, becauſe not equally communicated, or not given to All, as well as to Some. Since no Reaſon can be given, why GOD ſhould be at perfect Liberty in diſtributing *Natural* Light in various Degrees to different Men, and different Nations, which will not equally hold with Regard to *Supernatural* Light, or that ſuperadded Aſſiſtance, in the Way of a Revelation: But,

2dly, SUPPOSING it was not a Matter of Favour in GOD to make a Revelation of our Duty; yet if our Chriſtian Revelation ſhall be communicated to All at ſome Time or other, and ſome Reaſons might be aſſigned, why it ſhould be communicated to *Some* and not to *Others*; then its Want of Univerſality would not affect its Divinity, or its having GOD for its Author. for thoſe who lay Streſs upon this Argument, muſt take theſe Two Things for granted, *viz.* That the Goſpel will

never be universally propagated; and that no possible Reasons can be assigned, why *all* Nations, as well as *some*, have not the Gospel communicated to them at the *same Time*. If there is no Reason for taking either of these for granted; then the whole Support of this Objection is taken away.

As to the first of these, an Apostle of our SAVIOUR's, St. *Paul* †, has told us, That the Time will come, when the Fulness of the *Gentiles* shall be brought into the Church of CHRIST; and that then the *Jews* too should universally come into a Profession of our Christian Religion. A Preacher then of this Religion having told us, that this would be the Case, no *Deist* can with Reason object, that because the Time is not yet come, therefore it will never come. If St. *Paul* had told us the precise Time, when this should be; and such Time had been elapsed, we must have given up this Argument concerning the Universal Propagation of our Religion,

† Romans xi. 25.

Religion, and owned that the Apoſtle had miſtaken our SAVIOUR's Meaning. But as there are no particular Marks or Signatures, by which we may judge at what particular Time this ſhould be brought to paſs, no Argument can be fairly drawn againſt our Chriſtian Religion, from its not being as yet univerſal. But then it may be ſaid, That if Revelation is a great Benefit, it cannot be thought, that as the whole Earth is the LORD's, and the Fulneſs thereof, and that He is as much the Common FATHER of the *paſt* Generations, as of thoſe which are *yet to come*; it cannot be thought, that He would have left ſo many Parts of the Earth in Darkneſs for ſo many Ages ſince the *Goſpel* was firſt publiſhed in the *Roman* Empire; but would have long e'er this communicated the *Goſpel* to them. Our Anſwer to this is, That tho' we do not pretend to tell the particular Reaſons which determined an infinitely Wiſe BEING not to ſend his Apoſtles into *China*, *Tartary*, or *America*, at the ſame Time as He ſent them over all the

Roman World: Yet if any probable Reason can be assigned, why it was not at the *same* Time Preached to them, *that* will be sufficient to destroy the Force of this Objection.

ONE Reason why the Christian Religion was not Preached to every Nation of the Earth, at the same Time as it was to those who lived within the Bounds of the *Roman* Empire or bordered upon it, might be, That such Nations were not qualified for receiving the *Gospel* at that Time. All Lawgivers have been won't to suit their Laws to the Nature of the People for whom they designed them; if the People they were to govern were ignorant and unpolished, the prescribing to them at *first* the most exact Rules of Behaviour, would be Labour lost upon them; they would be incapable of bearing with them, and therefore receive no Benefit from them. As their Barbarity wore off, some Irregularities which had been before tolerated, would be then with good Reason corrected and reformed, according to the strictest

Rule

Rules of good Senſe. The Great Legiſlator of the World ſeems to have acted in this Manner, with Regard to the Two Inſtitutions He gave by *Moſes* and by CHRIST; by the firſt He allowed of ſome Things in Condeſcenſion to the Obſtinacy and Stupidity of the *Iſraelites*, ſuch as Divorces upon the ſlighteſt Pretences; He enjoyned many carnal Ordinances, of which the Prophet * *Ezekiel* ſays, by Order from GOD, that they were not *good* in themſelves, nor acceptable to Him on any other Account, than as they were at *that* Time neceſſary to preſerve them from imitating the Faſhions of their Neighbouring Nations, and paying Divine Worſhip to Stocks and Stones. When they were well cured of this Inclination to worſhip the DEITY after the Manner of their Neighbours, as 'tis allowed on all Hands they were before our SAVIOUR's coming amongſt them, He then ſent a Perſon to deliver them a more perfect Religion. When their

* Ezekiel xx. 25.

Notions concerning the Nature of the Supreme BEING were improved by the ſpiritual Interpretations, which their Prophets from Time to Time gave of the Law of *Moſes*, and by their Converſe with the *Greek* Philoſophers, which appears plainly by the Writings of thoſe *Jews* that lived after the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, ſuch as the Writers of the Book of *Wiſdom*, *Eccleſiaſticus*, and others, then GOD ſent his Son to them, to teach them a more Spiritual Worſhip; a Worſhip or Honour more ſuitable to the real Nature of GOD, than entertaining Him, as they had hitherto done, with Sheep and Oxen, which GOD was pleaſed to accept at their Hands, 'till they were capable of knowing Him better. At this Time, 'tis to be particularly obſerved, That all Nations, as well as the *Jews*, *viz.* all that lived within the Bounds of the *Roman* Empire, or were Borderers upon it, had more or leſs profited by frequenting the Schools of the Philoſophers, and Reading their *Ethical* and *Metaphyſical* Lectures, in which they treated concerning the Nature of GOD, and

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the Excellency of Virtue, in a much clearer Manner than any *others*, in any *other* Parts of the World, had ever done before them. And tho' their Excellent Diſcourſes were not ſufficient for perſuading People to give up the Eſtabliſhed Religion; yet they prepared Mens Minds for receiving a better, whenever it ſhould come to them well recommended.

WHEREAS the other Parts of the World which had no Commerce with the *Romans*, as far as we know any thing of them, were perfectly Barbarous, being ignorant of the firſt Rudiments of Religion; if they had any Traditions of the firſt Antiquity, yet they knew not how to make any Uſe of them, or draw any uſeful Concluſions from them, as Dr. *Burnet* obſerves *. Tho' the *Babylonians* and *Egyptians* had been in Poſſeſſion of very ancient Traditions for many Ages, yet nothing of Uſe was drawn from them, 'till the *Greek* Philoſophers undertook

* Archæologia, cap. 8. p. 72, 75.

dertook them, of which he gives one remarkable Instance, "That tho' *these* "Nations had Records of all the *Eclipses* "that had been from the Beginning of "the World, yet they were never a- "ble to foretell an *Eclipse*; that this "Discovery was reserved for *Thales*, "who from *their* Historical Registers "of *past Eclipses*, took the first Hint of "calculating the Times of *future* ones." And therefore *such* Persons for Want of improving their Minds, would have been incapable of relishing a Religion so perfectly Rational as our Christian: It would have been casting Pearls before Swine, giving them what they would not have thanked GOD for, because too much above their Way of Thinking.

As to the *Americans*, we know not when that Continent was first peopled, or whether it was at all before our SAVIOUR's Coming; for *Garcilasso* tells us when the *Spaniards* first came there, they could give no Account of themselves higher up than Five Hundred Years, and therefore the Gospel not being

being preached in that great Continent of *America* at the ſame Time, as it was in the *Roman* Empire, ought to be no Objection againſt it. I need not take any Notice of the Objection, as it concerns the *Scythians* or *Tartars*, becauſe having none of their Hiſtories to inform us of them, we are at full Liberty to ſuppoſe them as barbarous, and as unqualify'd for receiving Chriſtianity, as we pleaſe.

THE onely Nation which could pretend to any Degree of Politeneſs at that Time, and which had not the Goſpel preached to them, were the *Chineſe*: And yet how much ſoever the Literature of theſe People has been cried up, 'tis certain it was very mean. 'Tis plain they were very poorly skilled in *Metaphyſicks*, not having any Notion of a Supreme BEING; and this cannot be doubted. Since * Father

* De ſummo ac primo rerum Authore mirum apud omnes Silentium; quippe in tam copioſâ linguâ, ne nomen quidem Deus habet. Martini Hiſtoria Sinica. Lib. 1.

ther *Martini* who was long in the Country, and well underſtood their Language, aſſures us, "That there "was not a Name in the *Chineſe* "Language which would expreſs the "loweſt Idea, which the moſt barba-"rous Nations had of a God:" And the *Syrian* Inſcription, diſcover'd in 1625, is a farther Proof of it: For tho' there had been *Syrian* Miſſionaries in that Country for above One Hundred Forty-ſix Years, and therefore ſome of them muſt have throughly underſtood the *Chineſe* Language, yet when they were to erect a Monument with an Inſcription for perpetuating the Memory of their Miſſion, they were forced to expreſs the Soveraign *Being* by the *Syriack* Word *Alaha*, tho' every other Word of the Inſcription is in the *Chineſe* Language: Juſt as the *Spaniards* uſe the Word *Dios* to inſtruct ſuch of the *Americans*, who have not any Idea of a GOD, or any Word in

[y] China Illuſtrata. Kircheri, pag. 22.

in their Language by which to expreſs it. And therefore if any People were diſqualified for receiving ſo excellent an Inſtitution as our Chriſtian, the *Chineſe* muſt be of that Number, as being ignorant of that which is preſuppoſed to every Revelation, the Being of a GOD, or a Free, Intelligent, and Powerful Agent. Whereas the *Greek* Philoſophy, being ſpread over all the *Roman* Empire, had formed Mens Minds into a truer Way of Thinking, and from thence inſenſibly led them into juſter Notions of Religion, than were to be met with in thoſe Places where it was not known; and made them ready to embrace a Rational Religion, as ſoon as it was propoſed to them; which would be a ſufficient Reaſon why our Goſpel ſhould be preached to *them*, and not to the *Chineſe*, and other barbarous Nations. And therefore, for all this terrible Objection, a Revelation might have GOD for its Author, and be of uſe to Mankind, tho' all Nations were not at the ſame Time favour'd with it.

HAVING

HAVING shewn some of the Advantages of a Revelation, and that it may be of Use to Mankind, altho' no one Revelation has as yet been communicated to *all*, and that 'tis possible such Evidence may be given of a Revelation's being from GOD, as ought to satisfie every Reasonable Enquirer; nothing more seems to be necessary, besides proving that our *Christian* is supported by *such* Evidence.

IN the mean Time I shall observe, That it concerns every serious Person, who does not believe GOD has communicated Himself by a Revelation, to examine carefully into the several Pretensions to Revelations: For since there appears nothing unworthy of GOD, nothing but what highly becomes Him, as He is a Good and Gracious BEING, in communicating what would be a Benefit to his Creatures; it must appear very probable, that He has before this Time made some Revelation some where or other. As the *Deist* has heard of the Christian Religion, I would particularly

larly recommend *That* to his Conſideration; and he will, if he be a ſerious Perſon, think himſelf obliged, before he ſettles himſelf in *Deiſm*, to conſider carefully the Nature and Force of the Evidence by which 'tis ſupported, and not, as a great Part of our *Deiſts*, reject it merely for ſuch Reaſons, as muſt affect Revelation in general. For if it were barely poſſible, that the Goodneſs of GOD might have inclined him ſome Time or other, to ſupply the Defects of Natural Light by a Meſſage from Heaven, it would be both our Duty and Intereſt to enquire, Whether he had done ſo or not, and not offer to ſhew our Wit againſt the Chriſtian Religion, as the Manner of ſome is, before they have well conſidered it, and found any Thing in either its Doctrines or Precepts that is unbecoming GOD to require of us. For ſo much Reſpect is due from us to every Thing that carries the Title of a Revelation from GOD, that we ſhould give it a fair Hearing before we reject it; leſt haply while we may think we

we are Expoſing and Laughing at a Cheat, we be found in *earneſt* fighting againſt GOD. So much Regard is due to our own Intereſt, as not to make a Jeſt of an Offer that may be to our Advantage, 'till we were ſure that the Perſon who made the Offer in GOD's *Name*, did it without his *Authority*. We only deſire that the *Deiſt* would not laugh, before he knows what 'tis he laughs at; and then we are ſure to hear no more from him of the Religious Books of the *Bramins*, *Perſee*'s, and *Siameſe*, as Books of Equal Credit and Authority with thoſe of our Chriſtian Religion. For I am perſuaded he cannot mean, that all Religions are equally Rational, or equally uſefull to Mankind, (becauſe if he knows any Thing, he knows they are not;) but he thinks that they are, and muſt be all of equal Authority, one of them as much from GOD as another, the ſame Evidence for one as another, that is, none at all. And the Reaſon given for

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this, is only this poor one, *viz.* That there is no diſtinguiſhing what we call Miracles from the meer Effects of Natural Cauſes, and then indeed there can be no knowing when GOD ſpeaks, when not. If this be falſe, as I am fully perſuaded it is, and have already ſhewn it to be ſo in a *former* Diſcourſe *, then the *Deiſt* will *one Day* ſorely repent of his having made a Sport of the Chriſtian Religion, and will then call himſelf Fool, for not being able to diſtinguiſh between the Voice of GOD ſpeaking to him in the Perſons of CHRIST and *Lazarus* raiſed from their Graves, and when it only ſpeaks to him in the moſt ordinary and common Acts of his Providence: He will then wiſh he had been more ſerious in a Concern of this Nature, and not jeſted, when he ſhould have ſoberly examin'd, whether GOD had not ſpoken to him by his *Son*; whether

* Sermon XII.

ther there was not ſome Truth in what St. *Paul* told the *Corinthians* in the Words of my Text, that after the World had tired itſelf in ſeeking after GOD by the Help of Wiſdom or Philoſophy, *it pleaſed God* by a Revelation, or what ſome at that Time, and what he, and his Brethren ſtill call *Fooliſhneſs of Preaching, to ſave them that believe.*

SERMON XV.

2 PET. I. 16.

For we have not followed cunningly deviſed Fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, *but were Eye-witneſſes of His Majeſty.*

THE Writer of this Epiſtle in theſe Words endeavours to remove a Suſpicion, as if he and the reſt of his Brethren had magnified their Maſter's Performances. He tells thoſe that ſhould read

this Epiſtle, that they had not drawn up, as ſome others, an artificial Account of Things, but had given them a plain Narrative of the Miraculous Powers which themſelves had ſeen their LORD Exerciſing. That they had not, as the manner of ſome was, dreſt up a Life with a proper mixture of the *Marvelous* to ſet it off the better; for they had told them nothing concerning our SAVIOUR but what themſelves had been Eye-witneſſes to. And as another of the Diſciples ſays *, *That which we have heard, which we have ſeen with our Eyes, which we have looked upon, and our Hands have handled. That which we have ſeen and heard, declare we unto you.* And yet this plain and honeſt Declaration of theſe Apoſtles will not ſatisfy ſome Perſons. They will not believe the Diſciples ever ſaw any of theſe miraculous Works which, as they pretended, were done by their Maſter. I have already ſhewn, that if ſuch uncommon Works, as are related in our Goſpels, had been really

* 1 John i. 1, 3.

really done by Him, they would have been a good Proof of his Miſſion, and that the Religion He taught was from GOD: We have alſo ſeen * that our LORD's Diſciples could not be impoſed upon in the Account they have left us of thoſe *uncommon* Works, by taking *Appearances* for *Realities*. The only remaining Difficulty is, to ſatisfy the Unbeliever, That they were Honeſt Men, and believed their own Account.

THIS leads me to the third Reaſon by which the *Deiſt* defends himſelf, in not examining into the Merits of any Revelation; becauſe there are a great many Pretences to Revelation, and no certain *Criteria* whereby to diſtinguiſh the true one, if any ſuch were, from Impoſtures; for that there will be always Reaſon for ſuſpecting Perſons that pretend to extraordinary Communications with Heaven: That to be the Heads of a Religious Party, is a tempting Conſideration; if it meets with

* See Sermon XII.

wiſhed for Succeſs, Riches and Honours attend them: And therefore the Teſtimony of ſuch Perſons will be always ſuſpicious; and then as much Reaſon for ſuſpecting the Account given by the Apoſtles of our SAVIOUR's Miracles, as the fabulous Accounts contained in other Religions; which if true, would put the *Goſpel* upon a Level with the *Zendt* of *Zoroaſter*, the *Shaſter* that contains the Religion of the *Indian Bramins*, or any other Book that pretends to be Divine. That by the Confeſſion of Proteſtants, the Succeſſors of the Apoſtles have invented many cunningly deviſed Fables of Miracles, and the *Deiſt* will not believe but that the firſt Witneſſes to Chriſtianity, as well as thoſe that came after them, might have ſome worldly Views in deceiving us; for beſides the Honour of being Heads of a Party, they had not much to loſe, and were like to have a Chance for mending their Circumſtances of Life.

I WILL therefore ſhew, That the Apoſtles, as Things *then* were, could lie under no Temptation of forging Miracles;

cles, and that 'tis altogether improbable they ſhould intend to deceive us, by giving an Account of Things that they knew to be falſe; becauſe ſuppoſing their Account of our SAVIOUR's Miracles to be a falſe one, they would have had no Inducement for making a Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Religion, as they muſt ſee, if they ſaw at all, that the making ſuch a Profeſſion, would make them Abundance of Enemies, that would have the Power, as well as the Will, to ill uſe them, and no Proſpect of an Equivalent to balance Inconveniences. Mankind does uſually balance the Chances for Profit with thoſe of Loſs, and ſatisfy themſelves, that what they aim at, is feaſible, before they will undertake it: And therefore if the Apoſtles were Deceivers, they muſt have propoſed to themſelves an Advantage greater than the Pains they were to take, otherwiſe they would have been no better than Fools, which they cannot be ſuppoſed to have been by any that look into their Writings; beſides, no body can

believe, that a few Fools ſhould be able to cheat all the Wiſe Men in the World. But as the State of Things was at that Time, there was no Ground for expecting any Profit or Advantage by Preaching the Religion, unleſs the Generality of thoſe to whom they Preached the *Goſpel* received it, and that 'twas probable the Apoſtles would meet with ſuch Succeſs. But I will ſhew,

1ſt, THAT the Apoſtles could not poſſibly expect to live eaſy, unleſs they could reconcile the greateſt Part of thoſe, with whom they lived, to a liking of the *Goſpel*.

2dly, THAT there was no Probability that the *Goſpel* would have any ſuch Succeſs, at leaſt in their own Times; and who would care to have their Brains knock'd out for the Benefit of they did not know who, that were to ſucceed them?

1ſt, THE Apoſtles could not expect to live eaſy, unleſs they could reconcile the greateſt Part of thoſe they were obliged to converſe with, to a liking

liking of the *Goſpel*. The World was then divided in Point of Religion into *Jews* and *Gentiles*. The Writers that are called profane, do agree with our Received *Goſpels*, that at the Time when Chriſtianity firſt appeared, the World, in Point of Religion, was divided into *Jews*, and *Heathens* or *Pagans*. With Regard to the *Jews*, the Apoſtles could expect nothing from them, but the worſt of Uſage, as they were obliged to ſpeak in the beſt Manner of that Perſon, whom the whole Nation of the *Jews* had treated as a Malefactor, and whoſe Crucifixion they had been very inſtrumental in procuring. They could not therefore but think they ſhould draw upon themſelves the utmoſt Diſpleaſure of the *Jewiſh* Government, if they reflected upon its Proceedings; eſpecially if they were to tell the People, as *Peter* did, That their Governors were either ſo weak, or ſo wicked, as to procure the Death of that Perſon, whom God had ſent to be the Saviour of their Nation. And yet the Apoſtles ſpoke thus plainly, and in a publick Manner, as we ſee

in the *Acts of the Apoſtles* *. The chief Prieſts and Elders muſt ſee, that there was no Way of keeping up their Authority, unleſs they could Silence theſe Perſons. And the Apoſtles muſt ſee too, that they would ſtick at nothing to ſtop the Progreſs of this Sect. The Apoſtles alſo could not but know, that a People ſo tenacious of the Ceremonies of their Religion, would never endure any Perſons, if they offered to depreciate them, or draw Men off from their Eſteem of them; they might reaſonably fear their MASTER's Prediction would prove true, That thoſe who killed them, would *think that they did* GOD *good Service.* The Account which is given of the *Jews*, by ſuch Writers as lived near the Time when the *Goſpel* was firſt Preached, ſufficiently ſhews their Fondneſs for the Ceremonies of their Religion. *Juvenal* tells us, That they would not ſhew the moſt common Acts of Civility, ſuch as the putting a Man right, when he was out of

* Chap. ii. 36.

of his Way, or directing him to a Place, where he might find Water, to any but ſuch as were of the *ſame* Religion *. And we may obſerve from *Horace*, That they were taken Notice of in his Time, as a Sect of Religion that was moſt induſtrious in making Proſelytes †. We may eaſily gueſs, and ſo might the Apoſtles, what ſort of Entertainment they were to meet with from a People ſo much wedded to their own Religion. And tho' the Apoſtles *at firſt* allowed Converts from *Judaiſm* to retain many of the Ceremonies of their Religion, together with Chriſtianity, and were even ſo complaiſant to them, as to oblige the *Gentile* Converts to abſtain from ſome Things that were moſt diſagreeable

* Non monſtrare Vias, eadem niſi ſacra colenti,
Quæſitum ad fontem ſolos deducere Verpos.
Juvenal Sat. 14. v. 103, 4.

† Ac veluti te
Judæi, cogemus in hanc concedere turbam.
Horat. Lib. 1. Sat. 4. v. 143.

agreeable to the *Jews*, ſuch as the eating Things that had been offered to Idols, and Blood, yet there was no Reaſon to think that theſe Allowances would ſatisfy the *Jews*; becauſe they muſt ſee that the main Part of their Religion, the Temple-Service, muſt ſink, if Chriſtianity prevailed, and that the Apoſtles only permitted, without laying any Streſs upon, any other Ceremonies of their Religion.

NEITHER could the Apoſtles look for any better Quarter from the *Gentiles*; eſpecially if they offered to make any Proſelytes from that Religion: They muſt foreſee, that they ſhould be hated by them, for making Profeſſion of a Religion different from their own, as they ſaw their own Countrymen, the *Jews*, were univerſally deteſted by them for the ſame Reaſon. And that Reaſons of State as well as thoſe of Religion, would oblige every *Heathen* Government to ſuppreſs, if poſſible, thoſe that oppoſed the eſtabliſhed Superſtition, and to take away the Lives and Liberties of ſuch, as would be

be judged by *them* Diſturbers of the State, for endeavouring to carry off Mens Minds from the Government-Worſhip. And we find in Fact that Chriſtians were ſo generally hated at *Rome*, when Chriſtianity firſt appeared there, that when the City was ſet on Fire by *Nero*, and the People generally believed it was done by his Order, yet they were pleaſed to ſee the Chriſtians ſuffer as Incendiaries. For *Tacitus* tells us, "That when *Nero* laid "the burning of the City to the "Chriſtians Charge, they were not ſo "much found Guilty by any Force "of Evidence, as by the Univerſal "Abhorrence which every Body had of "that Sort of People *". People believed them innocent as to the Firing of *Rome*, and yet were pleaſed to ſee them puniſhed as Incendiaries: It was not much doubted, as *Tacitus* tells us, That *Nero* himſelf was the Incendiary; and yet the Averſion was ſo ſtrong againſt the Chriſtians, that the

* Convicti odio humani Generis. Tacit. Annal. Lib. 15.

the Compaſſion which uſually attends upon the miſerable, when they are believed to be innocent, could not be raiſed by all their Sufferings; And therefore 'tis plain whilſt this Averſion laſted, there could be no Hopes for the Apoſtles of living tolerably eaſy with them. But,

2*dly*, I AM now to conſider whether they could have any Probability of converting, at their firſt ſetting out, ſuch a Number of *Gentiles* and *Jews*, as would ſecure them, for the reſt of their Life, from the Ill-will of thoſe that continued in their *Infidelity*, and reward them too for the Pains they had taken in converting them. The only Pretence for ſuſpecting the Apoſtles Honeſty muſt be, that they might have an Eye to the Profits and Emoluments, which many of their Succeſſors met with. That St. *Peter* might dream of faring as well as the beſt of his Succeſſors at *Rome* have done. So *Porphyry* would have it thought, That thoſe who pretended to Miracles, by which he means Chriſtians, were tempted

tempted by a Proſpect of Profit to turn Chriſtians *. But we have already ſeen that this could not poſſibly enter into their Heads, unleſs they believed they ſhould quickly convert ſuch Numbers, as would be able to ſupport them againſt all Oppoſition. But the Improbability of ſuch quick Converſions will eaſily appear, if we conſider,

1*ſt*, THE Nature of the Religion to which they were to convert them, together with the State of Virtue and Vice, as it was when they began to preach the Goſpel. And

2*dly*, THE Difficulty of Impoſing upon the World at *that* Time, when they began to preach the Goſpel, by falſe Miracles or a Suppoſititious Reſurrection.

1*ſt*, LET us conſider the Nature of the Religion to which they were to convert

* Homines ruſticani & pauperes, quoniam nihil habebant, Magicis artibus operati ſunt quædam Signa. Hieron. Breviarium Pſalterij, Pſalm. 81.

convert the *Jew* or *Gentile*, and how they were diſpoſed at that Time for receiving ſuch a Religion.

EVERY one knows the Difficulty of perſuading Numbers of Men to quit their Opinions in Religion; tho' they be never ſo weak and indefenſible, if they have been for a long Time the Religious Profeſſion of the Country where they live. And 'tis as well known that the Difficulty will be greater, if the Religion they are to be converted to, flatters none of the Vices of Mankind; and the Difficulty ſtill encreaſes, when the Perſons that are to be converted to ſuch a Religion, are notoriouſly bad Livers. If this was the true State of the Matter, it muſt be allowed that the Apoſtles, ſuppoſing them to have common Underſtanding, could not flatter themſelves with the Hopes of many Converts. That the Doctrine which the Apoſtles preached, ſuch as we have it in the Goſpels, (and I ſhall afterwards prove that we have that Goſpel ſuch as it was preach-

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ed by the Apoſtles *) does not indulge Men in any irregular Behaviour, how agreeable ſoever to the Paſſions and Appetites of Mankind, cannot be denied by any *Deiſt* that has ever read the Goſpels; they cannot deny that the Goſpel contains a more perfect Morality, than ever appeared before in the World: And that it requires the Practice of every Thing that deſerves the Name of Virtue, and forbids every Appetite and Paſſion of corrupted Nature; ſo far I mean as ſuch Appetite and Paſſion are Effects of the Corruption of our Natures. It does not allow Men to commute for Internal Goodneſs by External Performances; it propoſes no Advantage to any Body upon any better Terms, than thoſe of parting with every vicious Inclination, and becoming truely good and virtuous Perſons. It was a meer Slander which *Celſus*, and afterwards *Julian*, caſt upon the Chriſtian Religion, as if it drew People into it, by

* See Sermon XVI.

by promiſing them an Expiation of all Crimes how great ſoever, if they would only perform ſome External Acts *, ſuch as beating the Head, and thumping the Breaſt, without any real Change of their Way of Life. For every one that reads our *New Teſtament* muſt ſee, that this *laſt* was chiefly inſiſted upon by the Apoſtles. And *Julian* too, as he was once of the Religion, might have known, from the Twelfth and Thirteenth Canons of the famous Council of *Nice*, that the Church in his Time did require a good Life, as a neceſſary Part of Repentance, and not meerly thoſe External Signs of it. Whatever Relaxations may have been ſince allowed of, will not at all affect my Argument, which is drawn from the Religion ſuch as it was preached by the *Apoſtles*.

IF we look into the State of Mankind at that Time, we ſhall find the *Jews* ſo attached to the Out-ſide of their Religion, that they had almoſt loſt

* Vide Juliani Cæſares.

loſt the Spirit of it. Then there would be ſmall Hopes of perſuading ſuch Perſons to part with their Ceremonies, the only Cloak for their Wickedneſs, for a Religion that required a ſincere and unaffected Goodneſs. And as little could the Apoſtles hope for Succeſs among the *Greeks* and *Romans*; for all the Hiſtorians who have left us any Account of thoſe Times, give ſuch a Character of the Corruptions that generally prevailed in them, as would make any Man, who had the leaſt Remains of Virtue left, to deteſt them. A Religion that enjoins its Followers to moderate their Deſires of Worldly Things, would never ſuit the Taſte of ſuch an Age. A Voluptuous, Ambitious, or Covetous Man would never bear the Reſtraints, which the Goſpel lays upon Mens Inclinations; and therefore the Apoſtles could not expect to make many Proſelytes out of this Kind of People, and yet this was the General Character of the Age.

BUT it may be ſaid, that tho' the Nature of the Religion was forbid-

ding enough to a bad Liver, yet they might flatter themſelves, that it would quickly make its Way in the World, by the over-bearing Weight of thoſe aſtoniſhing Facts, which they related concerning the Author or firſt Publiſher of it, as they knew Mankind, eſpecially the lower Part of it, with whom the Apoſtles ſucceeded beſt, was always apt to be much affected with Prodigies and marvelous Relations.

I WILL therefore ſhew, *2dly*, The extreme Difficulty which the Apoſtles muſt have met with at the Time when they began to preach the *Goſpel*, had they intended to impoſe upon the World by *falſe* Miracles or a *ſuppoſititious* Reſurrection. The Impoſtures and forged Miracles, that were pretended to ſome Ages after the Times of the Apoſtles, have led many Perſons into a Suſpicion, as if the Miracles which the Apoſtles relate, as performed by our SAVIOUR and themſelves, might be of the ſame Sort. But if we conſider the different Circumſtances the Apoſtles were in from thoſe of their Succeſſors,

ceſſors, who palmed upon the World many *cunningly deviſed Fables*, we ſhall find that nothing was eaſier, than for them to make the World believe, or at leaſt ſeem to believe, fictitious Miracles; and nothing harder than for the Apoſtles to have ſucceeded with ſuch Miracles. Which will be made evident by conſidering,

1*ſt*, THE Circumſtances of the Perſons that were to carry on the Cheat. And,

2*dly*, THE People that were to be cheated.

1*ſt*, THE Perſons that were to carry on the Cheat. The Number of them was no leſs than Twelve; if they were to be employed as Witneſſes of a Matter of Fact, we would not deſire fewer; but they were too many if they were to be intruſted with a Secret. They muſt be mad that ſhould embark in ſuch a Deſign with ſo great a Number, and believe that a Secret could be kept by ſo many Perſons, when any of them might have made his Fortune by betraying it, and

had Reaſon to fear Gibbets and Croſſes for keeping it. And yet had any one of them been tempted by Promiſes or Threatnings to diſcover the Secret, the Deſign had been ruined beyond Recovery, and all their Hopes of making Converts extinguiſhed. The Apoſtles therefore muſt have been very weak Men, inſtead of being Crafty Men, as the Objection ſuppoſes them to be, had they built their Hopes of Succeſs upon ſuch a ſandy Foundation. Eſpecially too, if we conſider the Perſons themſelves, as well as the Number of them. Men who by the Accoutt they give of themſelves, had all forſaken their *Maſter*, as ſoon as the *Jewiſh* Government laid hold of Him; even the Perſon that appeared to have the moſt Courage, and Love for his *Maſter*, when he ſaw Him charged with Capital Crimes, for Fear of ſuffering with Him, denied he had any Knowledge of Him. Such Perſons, I ſay, that had not Courage enough to ſtand by a Truth, cannot be ſuppoſed fit Inſtruments for carrying on a Cheat: As they would in all Probability ſqueak,

as

as ſoon as their Lives were in Danger; for certain they could never have truſted one another, after they had ſo notorious a Proof of their Unfaithfulneſs to their *Maſter*: For why ſhould they ſuppoſe they could ſtand more courageouſly by one another, than they had done by their *Maſter*, whom they diſowned at the firſt approach of Danger? And no Body can believe that the Apoſtles would have given ſo ſcandalous an Account of their own Behaviour, had it not been true.

WHEREAS thoſe who *afterwards* counterfeited Miracles, if they had the Ill-luck to be diſcovered, ran no Hazard of either Life or Fortune. The Chriſtian Religion had *then* the Support and Encouragement of the Civil Government, and therefore whatever was done in Favour of it, would paſs for a pious Zeal for the Service of GOD and CHRIST: There would be little Reaſon to fear, that thoſe who were concerned in the Cheat, whatever their Numbers were, ſhould make a Diſcovery of it, becauſe there would be no

worldly Motives to betray one another: For if the Miracle ſucceeded, they might hope to be Gainers by it; and if it was diſcovered, they had nothing worſe to fear, than that ſome People might ſay of them, That they had more *Zeal* than *Underſtanding*. And therefore 'tis a groundleſs Suſpicion which is drawn from the Counterfeit Miracles of the VIth, and following Centuries to the Miracles of our SAVIOUR and his Apoſtles. But,

2dly, IF we conſider the People that were to be cheated, the Caſe of the Apoſtles and their Succeſſors was very different.

1ſt, AS the Perſons that were to believe their Account of Miracles, were Enemies to the Chriſtian Religion.

2dly, AS they were better able in their Time to diſtinguiſh fictitious from real Miracles.

1ſt, AS the Perſons that were to believe their Account of Miracles, were Enemies to the Chriſtian Religion, and as *ſuch*, would not eaſily give Credit to thoſe Miracles which were to be the chief

chief Support of that Religion. It is natural to believe that thoſe who hated the Religion, would be no Friends to Miracles, becauſe theſe were to give it a Reputation in the World. The Apoſtles who muſt ſee that nothing but the Force of Evidence would work upon them, would have therefore little Reaſon for hoping that their Miracles, if *counterfeit*, ſhould paſs the Examination of ſuch prejudiced Perſons; whereas thoſe who boaſted of Miracles in ſome particular Ages of the Church, did it among ſuch as were Friends to Chriſtianity, and wiſhed to have the ſame Evidence given to it in their Times, as had been in thoſe of the Apoſtles. And therefore ſuch Perſons being prepoſſeſs'd in Favour of them, there would be little Difficulty in impoſing falſe Miracles upon them. They knew that ſuch Perſons would wiſh, for the Honour of the Religion, that their Miracles were *true* ones; and therefore would not be too curious in examining, for fear they ſhould find it to be otherwiſe than they wiſhed for. Beſides,

2*dly*, THERE was another Diſadvantage which the Apoſtles lay under, which was that they lived in a diſcerning and inquiſitive Age, that would not take Things upon Truſt, becauſe well able to diſtinguiſh *Fictions* from *Realities*. When the Apoſtles firſt began to preach the Goſpel, moſt Parts of Learning were in as great a Degree of Perfection as they had ever been before; The Inquiries into *Nature* and its ſeveral Powers, carried to a very great Height, when compared with ſome ſucceeding Ages. And therefore the World would have been much better qualified for diſtinguiſhing the *Natural* from the *Marvelous*. The Apoſtles, conſidering their Education, could not hope to impoſe upon ſuch a People, or if they had been ſo vain to attempt it, muſt have been quickly convicted of an Impoſture. If it be ſaid that they began with the lower Part of the World, and made Converts at firſt of ſuch as were very ignorant, which *Celſus* charges upon them; ſuppoſing it to be true, that they at firſt made Converts of only the lower Part,

which

which yet is falſe; it cannot be ſuppoſed that the upper Part of the World would ſit idle, and let them carry People off from the Eſtabliſhed Worſhip, had they been able to detect them of any Fraud. We find by *Pliny*'s Letter to *Trajan*, That the Great Men ſpared neither Coſt nor Pains, neither Promiſes nor Threats, to make the Chriſtians confeſs or own a Cheat. If the Apoſtles had been Men of ſo much Cunning as the Objection ſuppoſes, they would have been diſcouraged from undertaking a Cheat in ſo unſeaſonable a Time. The proper Times for Impoſture are Times of Ignorance, when any Thing unuſual may be made to paſs for a *true* Miracle, and Perſons are ready to believe any Thing ſtrange that is told them, and the more unlikely to be true, the more forward in believing. Such are the Times in which Fraud and Impoſtures are wont to thrive, and ſuch were the Times, when to the Shame of Chriſtians, *counterfeit* Miracles crept into the Church of GOD: And the Hiſtories of thoſe Times ſhew that the Pretences

to

to Miracles were multiplied, in Proportion as the Ignorance of the People encreas'd. And therefore tho' latter Ages might carry on Cheats ſucceſsfully, it does not follow that the Apoſtles could hope to do ſo: Or becauſe ſome of the Succeſſors of St. *Peter* in a *dark* Age, might make People believe they work'd Miracles when they did not, that St. *Peter* in a *Critical* Age might have made the World believe the Reſurrection of our SAVIOUR, altho' in *Reality* no ſuch Thing had been.

THUS I have ſhewn that the Apoſtles could propoſe no worldly Advantage to themſelves by embracing the Chriſtian Religion; as they could not reaſonably expect to make Converts of the greateſt Part of the *Roman* Empire, or to get the Chriſtian to be the Eſtabliſhed Religion in their own Times; and that unleſs this could be effected, they muſt, inſtead of Honours and Emoluments, expect the worſt of Treatment from both *Jew* and *Gentile*, and that if they built their Hopes of Succeſs upon pretending to a Power of working

working Miracles, that there was not any Likelyhood they would be able to make *falſe* Miracles paſs for *true* Ones, with Perſons prejudic'd againſt the Belief of them. Such Perſons too as had Abilities ſufficient for diſtinguiſhing *Realities* from *Impoſtures*. Theſe are ſuch Difficulties attending the *Deiſt*'s Suppoſition of the Apoſtles being Deceivers; ſo irreconcilable with the uſual Workings of the Human Nature, that we ought to believe them ſincere Perſons.

IF it be ſaid that the Apoſtles might pleaſe themſelves with being Heads of a Party, and in Courſe eſteem'd by ſuch as they could bring into it; which is the only poſſible Inducement left them; This is ſuch thin Diet, as would never ſupport a Man againſt the Difficulties which the Apoſtles expected, and actually met with: For what Inducement would it be, to be eſteemed by a ſmall Number of Perſons, almoſt all of them of mean Condition; and at the ſame Time to be deſpiſed by the reſt of the World; and not only deſpiſed, but perſecuted even to

Death.

Death. Whatever Pride and Vanity there may be in our Natures, yet no Man of Common Senſe can think the Eſteem of a few *mean* Perſons, a ſufficient Recompence for being ſcorned and deſpiſed by all thoſe who had any Character for Reputation in the World. Had the Deſire of Glory been their Motive for Preaching the Goſpel, they muſt have been quickly diſcouraged, when they ſaw themſelves treated with greater Contempt than any other Sort of Men, meerly for Preaching it. They muſt have given over the Attempt when they found nothing got by it, but the Reputation of being Perſons that were either mad or very wicked. St. *Paul* tells us they were looked upon as *Fools for* CHRIST's *Sake* *, that they were expoſed in the Theatres to be a *Spectacle to the People* †, as profane Perſons, that were Enemies to all Religion; they were firſt laugh'd at, and then put to Death. Thoſe who can

* 1 Cor. iv. 10. † *Ibid.* ver. 9.

can believe, that any Perſons can be tickled with ſuch Sort of Fame, may believe any Thing: And therefore the *Deiſt* labours in vain, whilſt he endeavours to perſuade himſelf and others, that the Apoſtles were Deceivers.

THE only Refuge left him would be this: That the Apoſtles preached no ſuch Religion at the ſame Time ſet down in the Writings of the *New Teſtament*, but that the whole was a fictitious Account of Things and Perſons, publiſhed ſome Years after that Time, when it would not be eaſy to confute the Publiſhers. But 'tis impoſſible this ſhould be true, becauſe if the firſt Publication of the Religion had been ſome Years after that Time which the Scriptures mention, as thoſe Scriptures expreſsly ſay the Goſpel had been preached ſome Years before *this* Publication of it, and in ſo Publick a Place as *Jeruſalem*, the Metropolis of *Judea*, and the *Jews* diſperſed over the *Roman* Empire; every one muſt preſently have found it to be a Cheat, becauſe the *Jews* could have told them, they had never

never before heard of any ſuch Religion preached in their Country. But we are further aſſured that the Goſpel was not *firſt* preached ſome Years *after* the Time ſet down in the *New Teſtament*, becauſe we have an *Heathen* Author of good Credit, that was born but a few Years after the firſt Preaching of it; who ſpeaking of the Beginning of Chriſtianity tells us, "That the Au-"thor of this Sect was CHRIST; "who in the Reign of *Tiberius* was "put to Death by *Pontius Pilate*, Go-"vernor of *Judea*," which agrees with the Times given by the Sacred Writers: And then he ſays, "Tho' "it was thus nipped in the Bud by "putting the Author to Death, yet it "broke out anew, and ſpread not on-"ly through *Judea*, but reached even "unto *Rome* itſelf *". This Author was too exact an Hiſtorian to give a falſe Account of the Original of a Sect, which was ſo *near* his own Time. But

* Tacitus Annal. Lib. 15.

But I ſhall ſay no more to this Objection of the *Deiſt*, becauſe it would be doing it too much Honour to diſcover all its Weakneſſes.

HAVING now ſhewn, That the firſt Preachers of the *Goſpel* could not be Deceivers, ſuppoſing the *Goſpel* to have been Preached about that Time, that the Writers of the *New Teſtament* tell us: That the Reaſon of the Thing, ſhews it muſt have been Preached at that Time; that the Teſtimony of an Author that was an Enemy to the Chriſtian Religion confirms it: Having alſo ſhewn before, That if the Apoſtles were ſincere Perſons, they could not be deceived in the Relation they gave of our SAVIOUR's Miracles, by taking mere Appearances for Realities: And that ſuch Extraordinary Works as they relate, muſt have the immediate Power of GOD for the Author of them; we have then a ſolid Foundation for the Divine Authority of our Chriſtian Religion to reſt upon; as it cannot be ſuppoſed that GOD would have Countenanced

tenanced it in ſo extraordinary a Manner, if it had not been from Heaven; eſpecially when the Religion itſelf lays Claim to ſuch an Original: Nothing more can be neceſſary for juſtifying the Faith of a Chriſtian, and at the ſame Time expoſing the Unbeliever, for making Difficulties in Religious Belief *his* Reaſon for not receiving our Chriſtian Revelation, than ſhewing what Aſſurance we have, that the Writings of the *New Teſtament* or our Four *Goſpels*, do contain a true Account of the Chriſtian Religion, ſuch as it was at firſt Preached by the Apoſtles. And the Ground for any Doubt in this Caſe is, Becauſe many Perſons did put out *Goſpels* in the Names of the Apoſtles, to give them the greater Credit, and perhaps thoſe we have may be of that Sort; that ſome of thoſe that have born the Name of an Apoſtle, have differed in ſome very material Paſſages from the Received *Goſpels*. However, ſuppoſing the Books we have were writ by thoſe whoſe Names they bear, what Aſſurance

rance have we that many conſiderable Alterations have not been made in them, conſidering the Malice and Careleſneſs of Tranſcribers, and the Number of Copies which have been taken, ſince the Originals of the Apoſtles were firſt Publiſhed. The Anſwer to theſe Difficulties will be ſeen in the following Diſcourſe.

SERMON XVI.

2 PET. I. 16.

For we have not followed cunningly deviſed Fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, *but were Eye-witneſſes of His Majeſty.*

IT muſt be allowed that the Diſciples of our LORD, as they were Eye-witneſſes, were beſt able to give us a faithful Hiſtory of the Actions of their *Maſter*. And the Writers of *Apocryphal*

Books plainly ſhew the Opinion the World had *then* of an Hiſtory of our SAVIOUR writ by them; ſince they knew no better Way of gaining Credit to their *Goſpels*, than that of affixing the Name of ſome Apoſtle to them; and as we have proved them to be Honeſt Men, nothing more can be neceſſary for clearing our *Goſpels* from any Suſpicion of being *cunningly deviſed Fables*, but ſhewing *their* Agreement with what was Preached by the *Apoſtles*.

I WILL therefore ſhew, 1*ſt*, That we have good Reaſon to believe, that the *Received Goſpels* were either writ, or allowed of by ſome Apoſtle.

2*dly*, THAT there is no good Evidence that any of the *Apocryphal Goſpels* were writ by that Apoſtle or Apoſtles, whoſe Name they bear: And how it might come to paſs that they were received by *ſome*, as the Writings of an Apoſtle, and yet be afterwards rejected.

1*ſt*, I AM to ſhew, That we have good Reaſon for believing that the *Received*

ceived Goſpels were either writ, or allowed of by ſome Apoſtle. In proving this Propoſition,

I WILL ſhew 1*ſt*, That there were *Goſpels* written from the Beginning of Chriſtianity, by the Perſons whoſe Names we have at the Head of our *Goſpels*.

2*dly*, THAT thoſe of them which bear not the Name of an Apoſtle, (as *Mark* and *Luke*) were always ſuppoſed to have been ſeen and allowed of by ſome Apoſtle.

3*dly*, THAT the *Goſpels* which are come down to *our* Times, were *theirs*, and not any *Apocryphal Goſpels*.

1*ſt*. THAT there were *Goſpels* written from the Beginning of Chriſtianity. by the Perſons whoſe Names we have at the Head of our *Goſpels*. This is a Matter of Fact, and muſt therefore be determined by ſuch Writers, as lived neareſt to the Times of their being firſt publiſhed. If we can ſhew, that both thoſe *Heretical* Chriſtians, who did not in all Points approve of *theſe Goſpels*, and made uſe of *others*, did yet

allow them to be written by thoſe Perſons, as well as *thoſe* Chriſtians who made Uſe of no others, we ſhall ſufficiently prove that theſe Perſons did write thoſe *Goſpels*. To begin with the *Orthodox*, or ſuch as allowed them in all Reſpects to be genuine. We find by *Irenæus* *, a Perſon curious in enquiring into Matters of this Nature, who flouriſhed in the IId Century, that St. *Matthew put out a* Goſpel, *after him St.* Mark, *then St.* Luke, *and laſt of all St.* John. After him *Euſebius* *, who took great Pains in ſearching for all Sorts of Writings from the very Beginning of Chriſtianity, whether Friends or Enemies, tells us, That the Four *Goſpels* were ἐν ὁμολογουμένοις, among ſuch Books as were on all Hands allowed to be writ by thoſe Perſons whoſe Names are prefixed to them. It is needleſs to mention any more Authorities of this Kind, becauſe the Church which uſed theſe *Goſpels*,

* Irenæus edit. Maſſuet. pag. 174.
† Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. Lib. 3. cap 25.

Goſpels, muſt be ſuppoſed to believe them written by thoſe Perſons.

AND therefore I ſhall proceed to the *Heretical* Chriſtians, whoſe Teſtimony will be more conſiderable, as theſe *Goſpels* did in many Places oppoſe ſome or other of their particular Opinions; and yet we find theſe *Goſpels* were in ſuch an univerſal Eſteem, that the earlieſt Hereticks found it neceſſary to have Recourſe to them, and to defend their Opinions by the Authority of theſe *Goſpels*, as *Irenæus* aſſures us *, "That the "Authority of theſe *Goſpels* is ſo firm-"ly Eſtabliſhed, that even Heretical

* Tanta eſt autem circa hæc Evangelia firmitas, ut & ipſi Hæretici teſtimonium reddant eis, & ex ipſis egrediens unuſquiſque eorum, conetur ſuam confirmare doctrinam. Ebionæi etenim eo Evangelio quod eſt ſecundum Matthæum ſolo utentes, ex illo ipſo convincuntur. Marcion autem id, quod eſt ſecundum Lucam, circumcidens, ex his quæ adhuc ſervantur penes eum, blaſphemus in Deum Oſtenditur. Qui autem Jeſum ſeparant a Chriſto, & impaſſibilem perſeveraſſe Chriſtum, paſſum vero Jeſum dicunt, id quod ſecundum Marcum eſt præferentes Evangelium: Hi autem qui a Valentino ſunt, eo quod eſt ſecundum Johannem pleniſſime utentes ad Oſtenſionem conjugationum ſuarum. Irenæus, pag. 190.

" Christians could not dispute it, and " were contented to support, as well " as they could, their particular Opini- " ons by them. That the *Ebionites* de- " fended themselves by St. *Matthew*'s " *Gospel*; the *Marcionites* by that of " St. *Luke*: Another Heresy (whose " Name he does not tell us) justified " their Opinions by St. *Mark*'s *Gospel*; " and the *Valentinians* by that of St. " *John* ". That these last received St. *John*'s *Gospel*, because they thought the First Chapter of St. *John* was a Confirmation of their Notion *of the Æons being in Pairs*. Thus we find the most early Hereticks endeavouring to defend themselves by the Authority of these *Gospels*.

I AM aware it has been question'd, whether the *Ebionites* made use of St. *Matthew*'s *Gospel*, or whether it was another *Gospel*, which was commonly called according to the *Hebrews*; which if true, *Irenæus* was deceived in saying, That the Four *Gospels* were confirmed by the Testimony of Hereticks; since one of them, *viz.* St. *Matthew*'s would not

not have had any ſuch Confirmation. That we may give a diſtinct Anſwer to this Objection, it muſt be obſerv'd, that if the *Goſpel* of St. *Matthew* was writ by him in *Hebrew* or *Syriack* (which the earlieſt Writers affirm) it muſt have been for the Benefit of ſuch Perſons, as underſtood *thoſe* Languages, and not the *Greek*: That thoſe Perſons were the *Jews* in *Paleſtine*, that the firſt Converts to Chriſtianity were made from theſe *Jews*; that ſuch were for ſome Time called *Nazarens*; that the *Ebionites* were *Syrian Jews* too, and only diſtinguiſhed from *them* by a different Name, on account of ſome Errors which they fell into; that the ancient Eccleſiaſtical Writers have believed the *Goſpel* uſed * by the *Nazarens* to be the *true Goſpel* of St. *Matthew*, and at the ſame Time tell us †, That the *Ebionites* made

* Epiphanius Hæreſ. 29. n. 9. Ἔχουσι δὲ τὸ κατὰ Ματθαῖον εὐαγγέλιον πληρέστατον Ἑβραϊστί.

† In Evangelio quo utuntur *Nazareni* & *Ebionitæ*, quod nuper in Græcum Sermonem tranſtulimus, quod vocatur a pleriſque Matthæi Authenticum. Hieron. Com. in Matt. 12. Idem in Catalogo Scriptor. Eccleſiaſt.

made uſe of the *ſame Goſpel* with theſe *Nazarens*; that unleſs the *Nazarens* and *Ebionites* did make uſe of this *Goſpel* of St. *Matthew* in *Hebrew*, we can ſcarce find any Chriſtians that did; but no one will believe that an Apoſtle ſhould write a *Goſpel* which no Body read; that unleſs the *Goſpel* uſed by theſe Perſons was St. *Matthew*'s *Goſpel*, it muſt have been entirely loſt within a few Years after it was publiſhed. For neither St. *Jerom* nor *Origen* before him were able to find any other *Hebrew Goſpel* of St. *Matthew*, than what was in Uſe amongſt *theſe* Perſons; and it cannot be ſaid that it was neglected, and ſo loſt becauſe no Body wanted it; for we are certain that the *Syrian* or *Syro-Chaldaick* Language which was called *Hebrew* *, continued for ſome Ages after *their* Times, to be the Language beſt known in that Country: It being the Mother Language of that Country, till the Religion of *Mahomet* prevailed, which was long after St. *Jerom* lived. Beſides, it is

* Acts xxi. 40.

is confeſs'd by all, that there was a *Goſpel* in the *Hebrew* or *Syriack* in Uſe among ſome Chriſtians in St. *Jerom*'s Time, and therefore the *Hebrew Goſpel* of St. *Matthew* would not have been, what this Objection ſuppoſes, uſeleſs. If it be ask'd how 'tis poſſible the *Goſpel* uſed by the *Nazarens* and *Ebionites*, ſhould be generally reckoned in *Euſebius*'s Time among Apocryphal Books, if it had been really writ by St. *Matthew*; the Anſwer is, that thoſe who make this Objection do not, as Father *Simon* obſerves, duely reflect upon the Original State of Chriſtians. The Primitive Chriſtians of *Jeruſalem* and *Paleſtine*, who made uſe of this *Hebrew Goſpel*, having not long ſubſiſted in their firſt Eſtate, and the others on the contrary who ſpake *Greek* being diſpers'd thro' the whole Earth, it hath from thence happened that the *Greek* Goſpel *only* was generally known, and therefore generally allowed of; becauſe all the other Chriſtians had taken their *Verſions* from this Copy. Whereas the *Chaldaick*

daick Tongue, in which the *Goſpel* of the *Nazarenes* was writ, was only underſtood by ſome *Jews*. And beſides, the *Nazarenes* who had retained *Judaiſm* with *Chriſtianity*, became odious to the other Chriſtians who were converted from *Gentiliſm*, and there was an irreconcileable Hatred between them; and then no wonder if ſome *Gentile* Chriſtians were not for allowing ſuch *hated* Perſons the Honour of uſing St. *Matthew*'s *Goſpel*.

ALL then that can be urged with any ſhew of Reaſon, by ſuch as deny that the *Nazarenes* and *Ebionites* made uſe of the *Hebrew Goſpel* of St. *Matthew*, would be this, That thoſe Writers who affirmed that St. *Matthew* writ his *Goſpel* in *Hebrew*, were deceived. And yet we know that *Papias* * in the *Eaſt*, who converſed with the Diſciples of the Apoſtles, and was very inquiſitive to know what they ſaid or did, tells us poſitively, that St. *Matthew* writ his *Goſpel* in *Hebrew*; he ſpeaks of it as a Matter of Fact

* Euſebius. Lib. 3. cap. 39.

Fact that was not at that Time doubted of. St. *Irenæus* in the *West* ſays, St. *Matthew*, being among the *Hebrews*, writ his *Goſpel* in their Dialect *; and others ſay St. *Matthew* writ it in that Language for the Sake of ſuch *Syrian Jews* converted to Chriſtianity, as were ignorant of the *Greek* Tongue †. But for all this Evidence, the many Additions and Differences from the *Greek* of St. *Matthew*, found in the *Goſpel* uſed by the *Nazarenes* and *Ebionites*, have made many believe, that they did not uſe St. *Matthew*'s *Goſpel*. Whereas they ought to conſider (eſpecially as the Evidence is ſo ſtrong againſt them) that thoſe Additions and Alterations might be owing to the Cuſtom of thoſe Times, when Chriſtians took a great deal of Pains to inform themſelves of what the Diſciples of the Apoſtles had learn'd from their Maſters, as appears by *Papias* ‖; and to preſerve them would probably put them down between the Lines, and

* Epiphan. Hæreſ. 51. † Euſeb. H. E. lib. 3. cap. 8. ‖ Euſeb. lib. 5. cap. 39.

and at the Margin of their Copy of the *Goſpel*, from whence ſuch Interlineations and Marginal Notes might by Degrees ſlip into the *Text*, and ſo become Part of the *Goſpel* itſelf. Many Alterations too might have been introduced by the *Ebionites* into their Copies, with a Deſign to favour ſome of the peculiar Opinions of their Sect. I am perſuaded there is more Probability that thoſe Alterations which were found in ſome Copies of St. *Matthew's Hebrew Goſpel*, (as appears by ſome Paſſages St. *Jerom* has quoted from it,) might have been introduced in ſome ſuch Way, than that all the Eccleſiaſtical Writers who have ſpoken of this Matter, even the earlieſt of them, ſhould be deceived in theſe two Matters of Fact, *viz.* That St. *Matthew* writ his *Goſpel* in *Hebrew*, and that the *Hebrew Goſpel* which the *Nazarenes* and *Ebionites* made uſe of, was St. *Matthew's Goſpel*. As to thoſe who deny the *firſt* of theſe, *Grotius* ſcruples not to ſay, *Nullis juſtis de Cauſis maximam piæ antiquitatis Conſenſionem repudiant* *.

BUT

* Com. in Matth. cap. 1.

BUT it may be ſaid that if theſe Hereticks did quote the *Goſpel* of St. *Matthew*, as well as the other Hereticks did the other *Goſpels*, that this would only prove that ſuch *Goſpels* with ſuch Titles were in their Times: But that their not receiving them, ſhould ſeem to prove that thoſe, which each rejected, were not thought by them to be writ or authoriz'd by an Apoſtle; that they only made uſe of them to defend their own Opinions againſt the *Orthodox*, who allowed them to be writ by thoſe Perſons, whoſe Names they bear. The Anſwer to this is, That we cannot find any of theſe Hereticks ever denied theſe *Goſpels* being wrote by *thoſe* Perſons, even when they were hard preſs'd to reconcile their Opinions with *theſe* Goſpels. If there had been the leaſt Suſpicion whether *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke* and *John* had writ any *Goſpels*, there would have been an eaſy Anſwer to the *Orthodox*, in telling them that it was doubtful whether the *Goſpels*, which oppoſed their Opinions, were writ by thoſe Perſons. But when the Church

preſs'd

preſs'd them with Paſſages, drawn from theſe *Goſpels*, they anſwered them either by giving a different Senſe to the Words, if they would admit any; or by denying thoſe Words to belong to the Writer of the *Goſpel*; for ſome of them, as particularly the *Marcionites*, ſtruck out of their Copies of the *Goſpel*, whatever was offenſive to them, as we have already ſeen by *Irenæus*: Or elſe they defended themſelves by quoting ſome Apocryphal *Goſpel*, which in an Age not over Critical, they found to be of great Service to them: for by prefixing the Name of an Apoſtle to *Goſpels* of their own putting out in Favour of their particular Opinions, they ſet up the Authority of one Apoſtle againſt another. This ſhews that in the earlieſt Times of Chriſtianity, when their Spuriouſneſs might have been detected, there was no Poſſibility of diſputing, whether Four *Goſpels* were writ by thoſe, whoſe Names they bore.

2*dly*, I AM to ſhew now, That ſuch of the *Goſpels* as bear not the Name of

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an Apoſtle, *viz.* *Mark* and *Luke*, were always ſuppoſed to have been ſeen and allowed of by ſome Apoſtle. To begin with St. *Mark*. He is ſaid by *Irenæus* to have been a Follower of St. *Peter*, and an Interpreter of his Sermons: And one that was antienter, being a Contemporary with the immediate Diſciples of the Apoſtles, * *Papias*, ſays, "That "*Mark*, who was *Peter*'s Interpre-"ter, had written exactly all that he "had retained in his Memory, with-"out obſerving the Order of the Words "and Actions of JESUS CHRIST; "for he had not himſelf heard JESUS "CHRIST, not having followed Him; "but he had followed *Peter*, who "Preached to the People, according as "their Neceſſities required." *Clemens Alexandrinus* tells us, That St. *Mark*, who for a long Time followed *Peter*, put into Writing the *Goſpel* which St. *Peter* had Preached at the Requeſt of the *Faithful*, and that this *Goſpel* was

* Marcus Interpres & Sectator Petri. Irenæus. pag. 187. Vide Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſ. Lib. 3. c. 39.

approved by St. *Peter*; for the Truth of which *Euſebius* brings not only *Clemens*, but *Papias* to be his Vouchers *. If in his † VIth Book he quotes the ſame *Clemens* for ſaying, that *Peter* neither approved, nor diſallowed of St. *Mark*'s *Goſpel*, *Valeſius* in his *Notes* upon the Place tells us, That this is eaſily reconciled; becauſe in the VIth Book he ſpeaks only of a publick Approbation of this *Goſpel*, and in the IId Book of what Encouragement St. *Peter* gave to it in private amongſt his Friends. As for St. *Luke*, we find by *Origen* and *Euſebius*, that it was the general Opinion of Chriſtians, That St. *Paul* meant *his Goſpel*, when he ſaid of him, "*Luke* "the beloved Phyſician, whoſe Praiſe "is in the *Goſpel*." If this were true, we have the Approbation of an Apoſtle given to his *Goſpel*, and an Anſwer to *Amyntor*, when he asks us, "Why "we do not receive the *Epiſtles* of *Bar*-"*nabas* and *Clemens* among the *Canoni*-"*cal*

* Euſeb. H. Ecc. Lib. 2. cap. 14.
† Euſeb. Lib. 6. cap. 14.

" *cal Books*, as well as *Mark* and *Luke*, " ſince the firſt were as much Com- " panions and Fellow-Labourers with " the Apoſtles as the later? " And the Anſwer is this; That theſe *Goſpels* were not only compoſed by ſuch as had been Companions with an Apoſtle, but were alſo *believed* to have received the Allowance of ſome Apoſtle. So *Euſebius* tells us, That 'twas commonly believed *, St. *John* look'd over the three *Goſpels* of *Matthew*, *Mark* and *Luke*, and approved of them. But there is no Evidence pretended for the *Epiſtles* of *Barnabas* and *Clemens* being approved by any Apoſtles. Some have even queſtioned, whether *they* were the real Authors of thoſe *Epiſtles* which now bear their Names, eſpecially of that which bears the Name of *Barnabas*. And therefore the Church might have good Reaſon for receiving *Mark* and *Luke*, and not *Clemens* and *Barnabas*, into the Ca-

* Τῶν προαναγραφέντων τριῶν εἰς πάντας, — ἀποδέξεσθαι μὲν (φασιν Ἰωάννην) ἀλήθειαν αὐτοῖς ἐπιμαρτυρήσαντα. Euſeb. Lib. 3. cap. 24. pag. 95.

non of the Holy Scriptures; and the Faith of a Chriſtian may be well grounded which receives theſe Goſpe for a Part of its Rule, without concerning itſelf about the Epiſtles of *Clemens* and *Barnabas*.

3*dly*, We are now to ſee, whether the *Goſpels* which are come down to our Times, are really the *Goſpels* writ by them, or only *Apocryphal* Writings, with their Names to them. And the Reaſon for ſuch a Suſpicion may be grounded upon this, That if the *Hebrew Goſpel* of St. *Matthew* could be altered to ſuch a Degree, and ſo ſoon after its Publiſhing, that in the Time of *Euſebius* it was become doubtful, whether it was his *Goſpel* or not; what Security can we have, who live at a much greater Diſtance from the Time when theſe *Goſpels* were firſt Publiſhed, that our *Goſpels* are not as much altered, as the *Hebrew Goſpel* of St. *Matthew* was in the Time of *Euſebius*: when the Alterations were ſo many, as to make it paſs with ſeveral for an *Apocryphal* Book, entitled, *The* Goſpel *according to the* Hebrews.

brews. Our Anſwer is, That Books in the Hands of the *Gentile* Chriſtians, could not be altered ſo eaſily, as thoſe that were in the Hands of only one Nation, *viz.* the converted *Jews*, and thoſe only the converted *Syrian Jews*; for only theſe made Uſe of the *Hebrew* Goſpel of St. *Matthew*. Whereas thoſe who read the Goſpel in *Greek*, were diſperſed all over the World; conſequently, a Multitude of Copies in Places at the greateſt Diſtance from one another: And therefore if any conſiderable Alterations had been made in *one* Place, they muſt have been taken Notice of by thoſe of *another* Place, who had none of them in their Copies of the Goſpel. Beſides the Number of Copies in Parts very diſtant from each other, which has always been the Caſe of our *Greek* Copies of the Goſpel; there have been from the Beginning a great Number of Tranſlations from the *Greek*, into the ſeveral Languages that were commonly ſpoken in the ſeveral Countries which made Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Religion. If there had been any conſiderable Alte-

rations made in our *Greek* Copies of the Goſpels, they muſt have been diſcovered by ſome or other of the Old Verſions; as the *Hebrew* Copy of St. *Matthew* was found to be greatly altered, by comparing it with the *Greek* Verſion; whereas the *Greek* Copies agree for the *moſt* Part with all the Verſions that have been made from the *Greek*: And therefore we cannot doubt that the Goſpels which we receive as *Canonical*, were the Goſpels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke* and *John*. I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak more particularly as to the Faithfulneſs of our Copies of the Goſpels; in the mean Time,

I PROCEED to the Second general Head which was, That there is no good Evidence that any of the *Apocryphal* Goſpels were writ by that Apoſtle, or thoſe Apoſtles, whoſe Name they bear; and therefore when they give any Accounts different from the Received Goſpels, that they are not to be regarded. That no good Evidence can be produced in Behalf of the *Apocryphal* Goſpels, will appear, if I can prove,

prove, 1*st*, That they were not taken Notice of 'till many Years after *that* Apoſtle's Time, whoſe Writing they pretend to be. Or,

2*dly*, THAT if they were quoted early by ſome Writers, they were not quoted as the Writings of an Apoſtle. The Author of *Nazarenus* has expreſs'd a particular Fondneſs for the pretended Goſpel of *Barnabas*, and the Reaſon of his Fondneſs ſeems to be its contradicting the Account our *Canonical* Goſpels give of our SAVIOUR's Death and Reſurrection. But 'tis certain, *this* Goſpel eſcaped the Searches of Inquiſitive Men, ſuch as *Euſebius* and *Jerom*, who made it their Buſineſs to inform themſelves of every Thing relating to Eccleſiaſtical Antiquity; and was not diſcovered 'till above Four Hundred Years after it muſt have been writ, ſuppoſing St. *Barnabas* to have been the Author of it. For the firſt mention that *Toland* could find to be made of this Goſpel, was in the Decree of Pope *Gelaſius*, in a Council held at *Rome* in the Year 493 *. But

* Nazarenus, pag. 6, 7.

I believe it will ſcarce be thought probable, that a Goſpel writ by ſo celebrated a Perſon as St. *Barnabas*, could have lain hid for ſo *long* a Time, eſpecially at a Time when we are told, that Chriſtians were very inquiſitive and deſirous to learn any Particulars relating to the Words and Actions of our SAVIOUR. 'Twas this ſtrong Deſire that encouraged Deceivers to put out *fictitious* Accounts of our SAVIOUR's Words and Actions under the Name of ſome Apoſtles; and the ſame Deſire would never have ſuffered a Goſpel, writ by a *Companion* and *Fellow-Labourer* with the Apoſtle, to have lain in Obſcurity for ſo long a Time *. The Author of *Nazarenus* does not offer to aſſign a Reaſon, why this Goſpel was not taken Notice of before the Time of *Gelaſius*, or of *Damaſus* at the higheſt; but contents himſelf with endeavouring to ſhew, that this Goſpel *might* be as old as the Times of the Apoſtles, altho' it does not agree with the *Canoni-*

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* Nazarenus. pag. 17.

cal Gospels in this Particular concerning the Death and Resurrection of our SAVIOUR. And the Reason given for this is, Because this Gospel is not the *only old* one, that tells us, that CHRIST was not *really* put to Death, and therefore that he did not "rise again; for "that the *Cerinthians* and *Carpocratians* "did believe that it was not JESUS, "but one of his Followers, very like "him in Person, that was crucified in "his Stead; and yet *Cerinthus* was Con-"temporary with *Peter*, *Paul*, and "*John* *. Thus far *Nazarenus*. But this Writer was much deceived in making *Cerinthus* to deny the Death and Resurrection of JESUS; for *Irenæus*, who lived near the Time of *Cerinthus*, was certainly a better Judge of his Opinions, than *Epiphanius*, from whom *Toland* had this Account of the *Cerinthians*, as he lived at a much greater Distance from the Beginning of that Sect. But *Irenæus* tells us, *Cerinthus*'s Belief was, that before the Death of JESUS,

* Nazaren. p. 17.

JESUS, CHRIST left him, and flew back to Heaven, but that JESUS ſuffer'd Death and roſe again. *In fine autem revolaſſe Chriſtum de Jeſu, & Jeſum paſſum eſſe & reſurrexiſſe* †. We ſee then this Account to be very different from that of the Goſpel of St. *Barnabas*, but agreeing with *our* Goſpels in the Fact of the Death and Reſurrection; and that this particular Circumſtance of ſome other Body being crucified, and not our SAVIOUR, was a Novel Invention, not heard of in the Times neareſt to our SAVIOUR, either by the Orthodox or Hereticks, and therefore a good Proof that this Goſpel was writ ſince the Time of *Barnabas*. But

2*ly*, AS to thoſe Apocryphal *Goſpels* which were taken notice of, and cited by the Early Writers; there is no Evidence that they were writ by thoſe Apoſtles, whoſe Name they bear; becauſe when they quote any Paſſage out of them, they either ſpeak of them as *Goſpels* forged by Hereticks; or elſe as of

† Irenæus, p. 105.

of Books whoſe real Authors were unknown, altho' the Title of an Apoſtle was prefixed to them. I do not deny that ſome Early Writers have quoted the Epiſtle of *Barnabas*, the Paſtor of *Hermas*, and ſome others, as the genuine Writings of thoſe Authors; but as to any *Goſpels*, there were none but our Four Goſpels, which had an undoubted Authority; it not being queſtioned, whether theſe Goſpels were Writ by thoſe Perſons whoſe Names they bear, as we have already ſeen; whereas every one of the *other* Goſpels were rejected by ſome or other of the *Hereticks*, and all of them by the *Catholicks*, as Spurious Pieces. Thus *Origen* tells us in his Firſt *Homily* on St. *Luke*'s Goſpel, That the "Church has Four Goſpels, but He-"retical Chriſtians many more;" among which are reckon'd by him the Goſpel according to *Thomas*, the Goſpel by St. *Matthias*: To theſe * *Euſebius* adds that of St. *Peter* and St. *Andrew*. The Goſpel intitled St. *Peter*'s Goſpel is alſo men-

* Eccleſ. Hiſt. lib. 3. cap. 25.

mentioned by *Origen*, but rejected by him as the † Work of ſome other Author. If ſome weak Catholicks did for ſome Time take theſe for Goſpels written by Apoſtles, this is no more than what commonly happens in all Forgeries, which will have a Currency, till they are carefully look'd into, eſpecially in ſuch Times as were thoſe of the Firſt Ages of Chriſtianity, when the Perſecutions Chriſtians met with from their Enemies, did not give them Leiſure or Opportunity for enquiring what Evidence there was to ſupport them; and therefore the Reception given them by ſome Chriſtians at firſt can be no Proof of their Authority, nor any Reaſon why they might not afterwards reject them. They might for ſome Time receive ſuch Goſpels, as the Writings of *Apoſtles*, and afterwards find themſelves miſtaken, without giving us any Reaſon for ſuſpecting the Authority of our Four Goſpels; becauſe *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke* and *John* were *from the Beginning*

† Tom. xi. Comment. in Matth.

ginning univerſally allowed to be the Authors of them. And thus I have ſhewn that the Canonical Goſpels received by us were the Goſpels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke* and *John*, that both the Goſpels of *Mark* and *Luke* were generally thought to have received the Approbation of an Apoſtle, and therefore we may depend upon a true Account of the Chriſtian Religion in theſe Goſpels. That no other Goſpels are to be regarded, when they differ from theſe, whatever pompous Titles may be at the Head of them; becauſe no good Evidence, that any of them were the Work of an Apoſtle. Therefore nothing more can be neceſſary for ſettling a Man's Faith in the Chriſtian Religion, but to ſhew that notwithſtanding the *Originals* of the Evangeliſts are loſt, (from which only we could hope for an exact Copy of theſe Goſpels) and the *Copies* that have been tranſcribed from them, do differ in many Particulars; yet the *Variations* either do not affect any Thing neceſſary to be believed or practiſed, or if they

they do, the true Reading is ſtill preſerved in ſome Copy or other.

'Tis evident to any one that has conſulted the Various Readings collected by Dr. *Mills*, that a great Part of them are meer Trifles, that do not affect the Senſe of the Writer of the Goſpel, which ſoever Reading we take. That many of thoſe, which are ſuppoſed to have been alter'd by Deſign, had only a Relation to Miſquotations of the *Old Teſtament*, or to reconciling one Evangeliſt with another, when they thought them to differ in ſome Circumſtance of a Fact; or to leaving out ſome Paſſages which they thought might be, or they found actually were, perverted and miſunderſtood: Or ſubſtituting others leſs liable to Exception in the Room of them: Or elſe the Alteration might affect ſome *neceſſary* Doctrine of a Chriſtian's Faith. To ſome one or other of theſe Heads may be reduced moſt of the Alterations, that are ſuppoſed to have been deſignedly made in our Goſpels. An Inſtance of the firſt Sort is ſuppoſed to be found in *Matth.* xiii.

xiii. 35. *That it might be fulfilled by the Prophet, I will open my Mouth in Parables*, &c. * *Porphyry* read it in the Copy he uſed, the Prophet *Iſaiah*, and made it an Objection againſt the Evangeliſt. And St. *Jerom* owns he found in ſome Copies the Prophet *Iſaiah*, but that *Iſaiah* was left out of the *greateſt* Part of the Copies in his Time, becauſe no ſuch Quotation was to be found in *Iſaiah*; for which Reaſon he ſays, *Arbitror poſtea ſublatum eſſe a prudentibus viris* *. An Inſtance of altering to reconcile one Evangeliſt with another is given in the *Time* of our SAVIOUR's Crucifixion, which St. *Mark* ſays was the *Third* Hour, and St. *John* about the *Sixth*, and yet 'tis obſerved, that ſome Copies of St. *John* had the *Third* Hour, as well as ſome Copies of St. *Mark* had the *Sixth* Hour, juſt as the Tranſcriber was inclined either to bring St. *John* to St. *Mark*, or St. *Mark* to St.

* Hieron. Comment. ſuper Matth. cap. 13.

* See the Author of the Commentary on the 77th Pſalm. Breviarium Hieron.

St. *John*. Of Omiſſions, and of ſubſtituting one Word for another, the Inſtances are, *Luke* xix. 41. and *John* vii. 8. The firſt is CHRIST's Weeping over *Jeruſalem*; this was thought a Paſſion unbecoming our SAVIOUR, and therefore, as *Epiphanius* tells us, was left out of thoſe Copies which were *then* thought moſt correct *. In the other Place of *John* vii. 8. 'tis thought that one Word is ſubſtituted in the Place of another: Our SAVIOUR had told his Diſciples, that He would have *them* go to the Feaſt of the *Paſſover*, but as to *Himſelf* that He deſigned not to go thither; and yet it appears by the Sequel of the Hiſtory, that He actually did go. St. *Jerom* obſerves, that *Porphyry* had mark'd this Paſſage as an Argument of our SAVIOUR's Inconſtancy, and therefore that the οὐκ was changed

* Αλλα ϗ Ἐκλαυσε κεῖται ἐν τῷ ϗτ᾽ Λυκᾶν Εὐαγγελίῳ ἐν τοῖς ἀδιορθώτοις ἀντιγεγράφοις. —— Ὀρθόδοξοι δ᾽ ἀφείλοντο τὸ ῥητὸν, φοβηθέντες ϗ μὴ νοήσαντες αὐτῦ τὸ τέλος ϗ τὸ ἰσχυρότατον.

Epiphanius in Ancorato. cap. 31.

changed into ἐν. to avoid the Force of this Objection.

OUR Answer to all this is, That no Body ever denied there have been such weak Persons among Christians, as might alter their Copies of the Gospels in such Places, as they found themselves unable to defend against the Objections the Heathens made to them. But then we say, that there is no Probability that such Alterations should so far obtain, as to throw out the true Reading in all the Copies of the World. That Copies of the Gospels in the Original were dispers'd into so many Hands, besides the many *Versions* of those Gospels, that neither weak Christians, nor St. *Jerom*'s *prudent Men*, would have it in their Power to carry their Alterations into all the Copies in all the different and distant Parts of the World. And we find it to be true in Fact, that in these Places, which are suppos'd to have been altered by Design, the genuine Reading is preserved at this Day in some Copy or other. And tho' St. *Jerom* says, in his Time *Isaiah* was left

out of moſt Copies in *Matth.* xiii. 35. yet *Kuſter* in his Edition of *Mills*'s *New Teſtament* tells us of one Copy in the *French* King's Library that has it at this Day, *viz.* the 6th *Pariſian*; as to the other Inſtances of deſigned Alterations, we find that which is *ſuppoſed* to be the true Reading, in more Copies than are thoſe that Want it; but if it had been otherwiſe, as no Part of a Chriſtian's Faith or Practice would have been affected by not having the true Reading of the *Evangeliſt* in any of theſe Inſtances;

I WILL proceed to conſider the Inſtances of deſigned Alterations in a Point of Faith, as concerning the Divinity of the SON; 'tis thought, that the Diſpute between the *Orthodox* and *Arians* was carried on with ſo much Warmth, that the *Arians* altered their Copies in ſuch Places where CHRIST was called GOD, or equalled to the FATHER, as 1 *Tim.* iii. 16. GOD *manifeſted in the Fleſh*, this ſome ſay, was changed into, *which was manifeſted in the Fleſh*; to avoid the Force of the Word GOD. 'Tis certain

both Readings were ſupported by a great Number of Copies; which ſhews the Induſtry of one of the Parties, to ſupport its Opinion. And the famous *Text* in 1 *John* v. 7. of the *Three that bear Witneſs in Heaven*, is ſuppoſed to have been put into this *Epiſtle* to ſerve Purpoſes.

THO' theſe Inſtances are not in the Goſpels, but the Epiſtles, yet as the Goſpels might have been as eaſily altered as any of the Epiſtles at *that Time*, I think myſelf obliged to ſhew, that a Chriſtian has leſs Reaſon to fear finding the true Reading in *theſe* Inſtances of deſigned Alterations, than in the *former* Ones; becauſe the Alterations before mention'd were made ſome of them much earlier, when there were fewer Copies of the Goſpels, than there were of theſe Epiſtles in the Time of the *Arian* Controverſy. For when *Arius* firſt ſet up his Doctrine, Chriſtianity was the Eſtabliſhed Religion, and diſperſed over all Parts of the *Roman* Empire, and conſequently Copies of the *New Teſtament* very much multiplied;

and it was the Intereſt of either Side to watch one another, that neither ſhould corrupt the Witneſſes. And therefore whatever Inclination there might be in the *Orthodox* or *Arian* to alter the Scriptures, it would not be in their Power, at leaſt in all ſuch Places as related to this Controverſy. Conſequently every Chriſtian may have enough to build his Faith upon in the *New Teſtament*, ſuch as 'tis brought down to our Times. If ſometimes there be a Difficulty of determining among many, which is the true Reading, and we know not whether ſome neceſſary Doctrine of the Religion be not treated of in the Place, we need not be ſollicitous; for if it be *ſuch*, we ſhall find it in other Places, where there is no Difficulty in ſettling the *Text*; becauſe thoſe which are undoubtedly the neceſſary Doctrines of the Chriſtian Religion, are ſo often repeated in the *New Teſtament*, ſuch as we have it, and ſo cloſely woven into the very Body of it, that there would be no removing any one of them out of every Place of the *New Teſtament*, without

without ſubſtituting another Sett of Goſpels and Epiſtles in the Room of the preſent ones, as will be evident to every one that makes the Experiment on any one Article of that which is call'd, the *Apoſtles Creed*: But we have already ſhewn it to be impoſſible that our Goſpels ſhould be, as to the main Part of them, any other than thoſe which were writ by *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke* and *John*; and the ſame Reaſon will hold as to theſe Epiſtles, which were more univerſally ſpread, more Copies and Tranſlations of them in the Time of *Arius*, than there were of the Goſpels, when ſome of the Alterations before mentioned were made.

THUS I have ſhewn that there is no Ground for ſuſpecting, that the Chriſtian Religion was from the Beginning of it a *cunningly deviſed Fable*, becauſe thoſe who firſt Preached it, muſt have been ſincere Perſons, and alſo that it cannot have been ſo altered ſince *their* Time, as to become one in *ours*; becauſe whatever Alterations may have been made in ſome Copies by Tranſcribers,

ſcribers, they could not affect our Chriſtian Faith, or hinder us from receiving the Goſpel, ſuch as it was Preached by the Apoſtles, in all material Points. And therefore whatever the *Infidel* may think of the Goſpel, I doubt not, it will appear to all *impartial* Enquirers to be no leſs than a Meſſage from Heaven made known to us, as St. *Peter* expreſſes it, in the Words of my *Text, by the Power and Coming of our Lord* JESUS CHRIST, as of a Perſon appointed by GOD to declare his Will to Mankind.

AND now I hope to have fully ſhewn the dangerous State of Infidelity; or that all the Difficulties the Unbeliever pretends to raiſe againſt Religious Principles, cannot ſecure him againſt the Apprehenſions of Puniſhment in a future State; we have therefore nothing more to do, but to beg of GOD, That He would be ſo Good as to incline the Heart of the Unbeliever to believe in HIM and his Son JESUS CHRIST.

" O merciful GOD, who haſt made
" all Men, and hateſt Nothing that
" Thou haſt made, nor wouldeſt
" the Death of a Sinner, but ra-
" ther that he ſhould be converted
" and live, have Mercy upon all
" *Jews*, *Turks*, *Infidels* and *Hereticks*;
" and take from them all Igno-
" rance, Hardneſs of Heart, and
" Contempt of Thy Word; and
" ſo fetch them Home, bleſſed
" LORD, to Thy Flock, that
" they may be ſaved among the
" Remnant of the true *Iſraelites*,
" and be made one Fold under
" One Shepherd, JESUS CHRIST
" our Lord, who liveth and reign-
" eth with Thee, and the Holy
" SPIRIT, One GOD, World
" without End. *Amen*.

FINIS.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM